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ABSTRACT

This four-part handbook, developed by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), is intended for use by two-year institutions under review, members of evaluation teams, and others concerned with good practice in two-year institutions. Part I reviews the purposes of accreditation, standards and policies, the college-Commission relationship, accredited status, periodic review, candidate status, review and appeal, alteration of the evaluation schedule, and eligibility criteria for accreditation. Part II describes eight standards for accreditation institutional integrity, educational programs, student services, faculty and staff, library and learning resources, physical resources, financial resources, and governance and administration. Following each standard is a list of supporting documents which might be useful to the institution and the outside evaluation team. Part III describes three types of accreditation policies: (1) testimonial policies developed by the Commission, which define good institutional practices in more detail than the accreditation standards; (2) national policies, which advise postsecondary institutions and accrediting agencies about good practice; and (3) operational policies, which affect the organization and conduct of business of the Commission. Part IV is an appendix which includes a description of accreditation agencies and related organizations, the WASC constitution and appeals procedures, and a glossary of definitions and acronyms. (JMC)

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HANDBOOK OF ACCREDITATION AND POLICY MANUAL

BY

ERNEST H. BERG
CARMEN MALDONADO DECKER
PETER R. MACDOUGALL
JULIE SLARK
ANGELO S. VILLA

**Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges**

**P.O. Box 70
Aptos, CA 95001**

**(408) 688-7575
FAX (408) 688-1841**

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Standards for Accreditation have been refined with time and the collective experience of hundreds of individual professionals who have contributed their labors and wisdom to institutional self studies and evaluation team service. College presidents, deans, academic senate presidents, and governing board members have contributed their valuable perspectives. Members of the 1989-1990 Accrediting Commission devoted hours to review and improvement of drafts.

The primary work of developing the 1990 edition of the standards was done by Ernest H. Berg, Consultant to the Commission, and by the Core Committee of Carmen Maldonado Decker, Peter R. MacDougall, Julie Slark, and Angelo S. Villa.

A special debt is owed to the members and staff of the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, whose excellent standards document contributed to the development of this Handbook.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION TO THE 1990 EDITION

This handbook is intended for members of the community of community, junior and specialized two year colleges. It is for the use of institutions under review, members of evaluation teams, and others who are concerned with good practice in two year institutions.

Institutional accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) is a voluntary, nongovernmental process involving institutional self study and professional peer review. Standards for accreditation represent generally accepted definitions of good practice in education. Policies, procedures and standards have been adopted and published by ACCJC after development by representatives of accredited institutions and review by accreditation liaison officers and institutional leaders.

The Handbook is published in loose-leaf format for ease of use and to permit incorporation of changes. New editions are published periodically. Comments and suggestions should be submitted to the ACCJC Executive Director or any member of the Commission. Standards are under continuous review by ACCJC member institutions and the Commission.

This document is to be used in conjunction with companion volumes. The Guide to Institutional Self Study and Reports to the Commission is a reference book on the comprehensive self study which includes instructions for completion and submission of reports to the Commission. The Handbook for Evaluators assists visiting teams in conducting on-site evaluations and preparing evaluation reports to the Commission.

The Commission is recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), a nongovernmental agency that represents most of the postsecondary accrediting bodies in the United States, and by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)* is one of the six regional accrediting associations covering the United States whose purpose is continual improvement of education and cooperation among educational institutions and agencies. WASC was formed on July 1, 1962 to evaluate and accredit schools, colleges, and universities in California, Hawaii, Guam, and the Pacific Island Trust Territories. WASC functions through a board of directors and three accrediting commissions: the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, and the Accrediting Commission for Schools. The board of directors consists of nine members, each accrediting commission electing three members.

Each commission, with the involvement of all participating institutions, develops its own standards, procedures, and fiscal policies under the authority and subject to the approval of the WASC board of directors. The accreditation actions of each commission are certified by the board of directors of WASC. Accreditation ceases whenever an institution requests in writing that its accreditation be terminated, when the Commission formally acts to terminate accreditation, or when an institution fails to pay its annual fees.

Purposes of Accreditation

Voluntary nongovernmental institutional accreditation as practiced by the Commission and the other regional commissions is a unique characteristic of American education. No institution in the United States is required to seek accreditation; however, because of the recognized benefits, most of the eligible institutions in this and other regions have sought to become accredited. In many other countries the maintenance of educational standards is a governmental function.

While the Commission works to establish minimum standards of quality for institutions, its primary focus is to foster educational excellence. Each institution has the responsibility of defining characteristics of quality and excellence for itself, and presenting evidence that such quality and excellence is being achieved. The Commission tries to deal with institutional differences in ways that protect both general standards of excellence and individualized educational philosophy and practice.

*For the WASC Constitution and list of candidate and accredited institutions, see the annual WASC Directory, which is available from each commission office or from WASC, P.O. Box 70, Aptos, CA 95001. For a list of regional accrediting associations and related bodies see pages 119-121.

Where an institution provides programs not commonly offered by accredited institutions of higher education in the United States, the institution bears the burden of demonstrating that the subject matter offered is appropriate to higher education, academic in quality and rigor, and can be reviewed by peers from accredited institutions.

The Commission accredits institutions, not individual programs. Therefore, in addition to assessing academic quality, integrity and effectiveness, the Commission emphasizes structures, processes, and resources.

In order to assist institutions in determining their educational effectiveness, the Commission has recognized five major purposes of accreditation:

1. To assure the educational community, the general public, and other organizations and agencies that an institution has clearly defined objectives appropriate to postsecondary education, has established conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected, appears in fact to be accomplishing them substantially, is so organized, staffed and supported that it can be expected to continue to do so, and that it meets Commission standards;
2. To encourage institutional development and improvement through self study and periodic evaluation by qualified peer professionals;
3. To develop and use standards to assess and enhance educational quality and institutional performance, and to validate these standards by ongoing research;
4. To promote interchange of ideas among public and independent institutions through peer review; and
5. To protect institutions against encroachments which might jeopardize their educational effectiveness or academic freedom.

Standards and Policies

Accreditation is a continuing process, the heart of which lies in periodic self-appraisal by each institution. In its initial application for candidacy or accreditation, and in preparation for each subsequent visit, every institution prepares an extensive report with primary emphasis on self-analysis and evaluation. Between scheduled visits, each institution addresses visiting team recommendations and submits annual reports.

As a result of extensive experience and research, the Commission has determined that there are certain basic characteristics of quality required of all institutions of higher education. These Commission standards, policies, and procedures are

periodically reviewed and revised. Revisions are made as needed, based on research, the experience of the Commission and visiting teams, and comments of institutional representatives.

The College-Commission Relationship

In carrying out its functions, the Commission has established a code of good practice, both for its relations with the institutions it serves and with regard to its internal organization and procedures. The full text of this policy is to be found on pages 96-98.

Every institution desiring recognition by the Commission is expected to abide by the standards and policies of the Commission, as stated in this Handbook and as may be developed in the future. As knowledge increases and the needs of society change, institutions are continually evolving in order to serve their students and community better. Consequently, the Commission continually reviews the role and validity of its standards and engages in widespread consultation with the accredited institutions in the region in order to incorporate their suggestions and receive their approval. The Commission conducts research to assess the validity, reliability and usefulness of its standards and procedures as aids to institutional improvement. The effectiveness of self-regulatory accreditation, however, depends upon the institution's acceptance of specific responsibilities, including compliance with all of the standards and abiding by the Commission's policies, procedures, and decisions. There must be institutional commitment to and involvement in the accreditation process. The process assumes that each institution has the responsibility to participate in and to accept an honest and forthright assessment of institutional strengths and weaknesses. As a consequence, a comprehensive self study report and peer evaluation are required. Only in this way will the validity and vitality of the accreditation process be ensured.

In its relations with the institutions it serves, the Commission is committed to:

1. Appraise institutions in terms of their own stated purposes within the context of Commission standards. Interpret standards in ways that are relevant to the character of the particular institution, respecting institutional integrity and diversity.
2. Emphasize the value and importance of institutional self study including systematic assessment of institutional effectiveness.
3. Assist and stimulate improvement in the educational effectiveness of the institution.
4. Conduct evaluation visits by experienced and qualified peers under conditions which, insofar as reasonably possible, ensure impartial and objective judgment, avoiding conflict of interest.

5. Include on evaluation teams representation from other institutions of similar purpose and academic program.
6. Provide institutions an opportunity to object, for cause, to individual members assigned to the team designated to visit the institution, with special concern for possible conflict of interest.
7. Require each evaluation team chair to arrange consultation during the visit with administration, faculty, students, and trustees, and to include during comprehensive visits a publicized opportunity for an open hearing.
8. Provide opportunity for the institution to respond in writing to the team report before it is completed, and to appear before the Commission when the report is considered.
9. Provide opportunity for institutional representatives and the general public to attend portions of Commission meetings devoted to policies and other nonconfidential matters. See policy on Public Access to the Commission, page 94.
10. Encourage widespread discussion and serious consideration of major team recommendations.
11. Request a written response from an institution or refer a matter to the next evaluation team when the Commission's attention is drawn to the possibility that an institution may be in violation of Commission standards or policies. A special interim visit focused on specified concerns may be scheduled by the Commission.
12. Make an initial visit for candidacy or accreditation to an institution only on the written request of the chief executive officer of the institution.
13. Revisit an institution consistent with Commission policies and periodic evaluation procedures and after due notice to the institution.
14. Permit withdrawal of a request for initial candidacy or initial accreditation at any time (even after evaluation) prior to final action by the Commission.
15. Revoke accreditation or candidacy only after advance written notice.
16. Encourage continuing communication between the Commission and institutions through the liaison officer position in each institution. See policy on Accreditation Liaison Officer, page 102.

Accredited Status

The status of accreditation indicates that an institution has met Commission standards.

In so doing, the institution has:

1. Undergone a period of intensive and comprehensive self study followed by an on-site evaluation of institutional performance, demonstrating that it meets Commission standards;
2. Demonstrated that it operates at a satisfactory level of quality in its educational programs consistent with its stated purposes and consistent with Commission standards;
3. Demonstrated the availability of sufficient resources to support existing and planned activities at a satisfactory level of quality, and offered reasonable grounds for belief that there will continue to be adequate resources in the future; and
4. Committed itself to institutional improvement, periodic self-evaluation, and continuing compliance with all Commission standards, policies, procedures, and decisions.

Periodic Review

Accreditation is attained by the process of evaluation of an entire institution and continues until formally withdrawn. It is subject, however, to periodic review and to conditions as determined by the Commission. Every accredited institution files an annual report and undergoes a comprehensive self study and evaluation at least every six years. A Midterm Report describing progress in responding to team recommendations is submitted in the third year following the evaluation visit. The Commission may request special interim reports and visits to assure progress in addressing specified issues of concern.

If an institution undergoes significant change or if its educational effectiveness is questioned, the Commission reserves the right to review that institution's accreditation without regard to any previously indicated time pattern.

As a voluntary, nongovernmental agency, the Commission does not have the responsibility to exercise the regulatory control of state and federal governments, or to apply their mandates regarding collective bargaining, affirmative action, health and safety regulations, and the like. Furthermore, the Commission does not enforce the standards of specialized accrediting agencies, other nongovernmental organizations, or the laws and regulations of state agencies, although

institutions may wish to review the publications of such other agencies as part of the self study process. The Commission has its own standards and expects that institutions and teams will apply them with integrity, imagination, and an attitude of humane concern for students and the public interest.

When an institution is granted accreditation, the following shall appear in all appropriate publications:

“(Name of institution) is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education.”

Candidate Status

Candidate for Accreditation status offers both new and established institutions the opportunity to establish a publicly recognized relationship with a regional accrediting agency. It is a pre-accreditation status, initially awarded for two years. Candidacy indicates that an institution has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward accreditation. Candidacy is a period in which the institution undertakes the necessary steps to reach demonstrable compliance with Commission standards.

An institution granted candidacy must use the following statement if it wishes to describe that status publicly:

“(Name of institution) is a candidate for accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education.

Candidate for Accreditation is a status of preliminary affiliation with the Commission, initially awarded for two years, following a specified procedure for institutional self study and on-site visitation. Candidacy is subject to renewal. Candidacy is not accreditation and does not assure eventual accreditation. It is an indication that the institution is progressing toward accreditation.”

Information about achieving candidate and accredited status may be found in Eligibility Criteria and Processes: A Guide to Achieving Accreditation, available from the Commission office.

Review and Appeal

Institutions whose applications for candidacy, renewal of candidacy, accreditation, or reaffirmation of accreditation are denied or whose candidacy or accreditation

is terminated by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges may request a review of the Commission's decision. Such a review must be requested prior to a filing of an appeal by the institution to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The policies and procedures which govern the conduct of the Commission's review are found in the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Constitution (pages 122-129).

An institution which, after availing itself of the review procedure of the Commission, still believes itself aggrieved by the Commission's denial or withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation, may appeal such action within thirty days of receipt of notice thereof, to the President of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The WASC President shall arrange a hearing for representatives of the institution before the Association's Hearing Board, established for this purpose, as prescribed in Article VI of the Constitution of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Alteration of Evaluation Schedule

An institution may petition the Accrediting Commission for alteration of its evaluation schedule. A written request submitted to the Executive Director will be considered by the Commission if the request is based on:

1. A plan to coordinate evaluation of institutions in a system;
2. Disaster, such as fire, flood or earthquake that impedes the normal conduct of institutional business for an extended period of time;
3. Severe and unusual circumstances that unavoidably disrupt the self study process or scheduled team visit; and
4. Substantive changes in the mission or status of the institution.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ACCREDITATION

Eligible institutions offering one or more programs of two academic years leading to the Associate Degree, located in the states of Hawaii and California, the territories of Guam and American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands may apply to the Commission for candidacy. In some circumstances application may be made directly for initial accreditation.

Prior to making a formal application, an institution wishing to become a Candidate for Accreditation must begin by assessing itself in relation to the basic criteria for institutional eligibility, stated below. The standards of accreditation and Commission policies should also be reviewed as they will provide a clear statement of ultimate Commission expectations of institutional performance and quality and give further definition to the eligibility criteria. The eligibility process is designed to screen institutions prior to a period of formal and extensive institutional self study, so that only institutions which meet the basic criteria for eligibility may proceed.

For more information about eligibility and achieving candidate and accredited status see Eligibility Criteria and Processes: A Guide to Achieving Accreditation, available from the Commission office.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

THE INSTITUTION:

A. Legal Authority

1. Has a charter and/or formal authority from an appropriate governmental agency (where such agency exists) to award a certificate, diploma, or degree. In California 94310.3A approval by the California Council for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education is required for private institutions.
2. Meets all legal requirements to operate wherever it conducts activities. If incorporated, the institution shall also submit a copy of its articles of incorporation.

B. Mission

3. Has formally adopted and made public its statement of institutional mission demonstrating that the fundamental purposes of the institution are educational.
4. The statement of mission is appropriate to an institution of postsecondary education and to the needs of the constituency it seeks to serve.
5. Provides evidence of basic planning for the development of the institution, planning which identifies and integrates plans for academic personnel, learning resources, facilities, and financial development, as well as procedures for program review and institutional improvement.
6. Has published admissions policies and procedures consistent with the institution's stated objectives.

C. Educational Programs and Resources

7. Offers one or more postsecondary educational programs of two academic years in length* and awards the Associate Degree.* Educational objectives for each program are clearly defined and published and there is a clear statement of the means for achieving the stated objectives.
8. Offers principal educational programs that are based on recognized fields of study at the postsecondary level and are conducted at appropriate postsecondary levels of rigor and quality.

*60 semester units, 90 quarter units

9. Requires for its degree programs that a substantial portion of each of the degree programs be in general education* at the postsecondary level. The general education component should include demonstrated competence in writing and computational skills and an introduction to some of the major areas of knowledge. A coherent and substantive program of general education may be required either as a prerequisite to, or as an essential integral element of, the programs offered.
10. Has sufficient faculty in terms of number and experience to support the programs offered, including a substantial core of faculty whose primary responsibility is to the institution. In addition, a clear statement of faculty responsibilities must exist.
11. Has learning resources including a staff, physical facilities, and a library adequate for the educational programs offered or has made specific long-term arrangements for student access to a library.

D. Organization

12. Has a governing board that operates as an independent policy-making body and includes substantial representation reflecting the public interest. If a separate institutional governing board is not possible or appropriate, the Commission may approve alternate means by which this criterion may be met.
13. Has a chief executive officer whose full-time responsibility is to the institution, and sufficient staff to conduct the affairs of the institution.

E. Financial Support

14. Has an adequate financial base, sufficient to assure future stability. The institution shall submit a copy of the current budget and a copy of the current audited financial statement prepared by an outside certified public accountant who has no other relationship to the institution.** The audit must be certified and any exceptions explained.

* Note Standard 2C and policy on General Education in Specialized Programs and Institutions (page 17 in the 1990 Handbook of Accreditation).

** It is recommended that the auditor employ as a guide Audits of Colleges and Universities, published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

F. Public Disclosure

15. Publishes in its catalog or other appropriate places accurate information that describes purposes and objectives, admission requirements and procedures, rules and regulations directly affecting students, programs and courses, degree requirements, charges and refund policies, academic credentials of faculty members and administrators and other items relative to attending the institution or withdrawing from it. Tuition refund policies should meet the American Council on Education Guidelines. (See policy, pages 88-91)

MAINTAINING ELIGIBILITY

Compliance with the criteria is expected to be continuous and will be validated periodically, normally as part of every comprehensive evaluation following institutional self study. Institutions are asked to include in their self study reports information demonstrating that they meet the requirements.

DUAL ACCREDITATION AND INSTITUTIONAL DESCRIPTION

Any institution seeking or holding accreditation from more than one accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation or the U.S. Department of Education must describe itself in identical terms to each recognized accrediting body with regard to purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituents and must keep each accrediting body apprised of any change in its status with one or another accrediting body.

Eligibility Policy adopted June 1989, revised June 1990

PART II

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

The standards describe good practice in community and junior college education. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges has established its standards based on experience, research, and extensive consultation with member institutions. Commission standards and policies are periodically reviewed and revised. Revisions are made as needed, are based on research, the experience of the Commission and visiting teams, and comments of institutional representatives.

The standards state the basic characteristics of quality required of all accredited institutions. The Commission believes that institutions can readily maintain their individuality while complying with these established standards.

The accreditation standards are divided into eight (8) areas, so numbered. Each standard in turn is divided into lettered sections -- *e.g.*, Standard 2A, 2B, 2C. The statement of the standard is followed by numbered sections (*e.g.*, Standard 2A.1, 2A.2, 2A.3, 2A.4) which give further definition to the standard. These numbered sections provide additional components of the standard, but are not designed to be an exhaustive enumeration of all of the components of the standard. In reviewing these standards, institutions are encouraged to add further components to give them greater meaning and depth, as well as greater applicability to each individual institution.

Following each standard is a list of supporting documents which might be useful to the institution and the visiting team. Within the section marked "Supporting Documents," items with (x) are to be included in or with the self study report mailed to the visiting team and to the Commission office.

STANDARD ONE: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY PURPOSES, PLANNING, AND EFFECTIVENESS

The four elements of Standard One are broadly applicable to each institution and to all of its constituent programs and services. An accredited institution presents itself to students and the public precisely and truthfully, with due regard for freedom to teach and freedom to learn. The institution states its goals with precision, engages in planning to achieve those goals, and evaluates its effectiveness in achieving purposes and goals.

Standard 1A Institutional Integrity

- 1A.1 Institutional policy regarding the safeguarding of academic freedom and responsibility is published and readily available.
- 1A.2 Governing boards and administrators protect and support faculty in their exercise of academic freedom. The faculty protects the academic freedom of its members.
- 1A.3 The institution fosters the integrity of the teaching-learning process. Faculty and other college staff distinguish between personal conviction and proven conclusions and present relevant data fairly and objectively to students and others.
- 1A.4 Institutions which strive to instill specific beliefs or world views or to impose codes of conduct on faculty, staff or students give clear prior notice of such policies.
- 1A.5 The institution fosters an affirmative environment in which diversity is embraced and every person is treated with respect.
- 1A.6 The institution provides faculty and students with clear expectations concerning the principles of academic honesty and the sanctions for violations.
- 1A.7 Representations about the institution to prospective students and to the general public are accurate and consistent with institutional practices.
- 1A.8 Precise, accurate, and current information is provided in the institutional catalog concerning (a) educational purposes; (b) degrees, curricular offerings, educational resources, and course offerings; (c) student fees and other financial obligations, student financial aid, and fee refund policies; (d) requirements for admission and for achievement of degrees; and, (e) the names of the administration, faculty, and governing board.

- 1A.9 Degrees held by contract faculty and administrators are listed in the institution's primary catalog. All U.S. degrees listed are from accredited institutions. Degrees from non-U.S. institutions are recognized only if equivalence has been established.
- 1A.10 The institution demonstrates honesty and integrity in its athletic programs.
- 1A.11 In its relationship with the Commission, the institution demonstrates honesty and integrity, and agrees to comply with Commission standards, policies, guidelines, and self study requirements.

Standard 1B Institutional Purposes (Mission)

The institution is guided by clearly stated purposes that define its character, which are appropriate for higher education, and are consistent with Commission standards.

- 1B.1 The statement of purposes identifies the broad-based educational objectives the institution seeks to fulfill, is adopted by the governing board, and is periodically reexamined with the participation of the campus community.
- 1B.2 In implementing its purposes, the institution has defined the constituencies it intends to serve as well as the parameters under which educational programs can be offered and resources allocated.
- 1B.3 Institutional purposes delimit educational programs and services and guide the development of physical resources and allocation of fiscal resources.

Standard 1C Institutional Planning

The institution is engaged in ongoing planning to achieve its avowed purposes. Through the planning process, the institution frames questions, seeks answers, analyzes itself, and revises its goals, objectives, programs, and services.

- 1C.1 An established planning process involves all segments of the campus community and the governing board.
- 1C.2 The planning process uses the results of institutional research on subjects such as institutional effectiveness, student outcomes, and demographics.

1C.3 The planning process assists in identifying institutional priorities.

1C.4 The planning process identifies the need for human, financial, and physical resources of the institution. Planning influences the acquisition and allocation of resources.

Standard 1D Institutional Effectiveness

The institution has developed the means for evaluating how well, and in what ways, it is accomplishing its purposes and uses results of these evaluations as the basis for broad-based continuous planning and improvement.

1D.1 Institutional research and program review are conducted as essential elements in planning and evaluating institutional effectiveness.

A. Research assesses such elements as instructional programs, student services, and the social/intellectual environment of the campus.

B. Program reviews are systematically conducted for educational and student service programs and other institutional activities to assess their effectiveness.

Supporting Documentation for Standard One

- (x) 1. Catalog.
- 2. Brochures and handbooks.
- 3. Statements or policies on academic freedom.
- 4. Planning documents.
- 5. Program review documents.
- 6. Institutional research reports.
- 7. Articles of incorporation or charter (nonpublic institutions).

STANDARD TWO: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Standard Two is broadly applicable to all educational activities offered in the name of the institution, regardless of where, when or how presented, or by whom taught.

Standard 2A General Provisions

The achievement and maintenance of high quality programs in an environment conducive to study and learning are the primary responsibilities of every accredited institution; hence, the evaluation of educational programs and their continuous improvement is an ongoing responsibility. As it analyzes its goals and discovers how conditions and needs change, the institution continually redefines for itself the elements that will result in programs of high quality.

- 2A.1 The institution seeks to meet the diverse educational needs of all its students.
- 2A.2 Sufficient resources are provided to meet the educational needs of the students.
- 2A.3 The institution demonstrates its commitment to high standards of teaching. Effective procedures and adequate resources exist to evaluate and improve the quality of instruction.
- 2A.4 Educational programs are structured to be consistent with institutional purposes, the demographics and economics of the service area, and the student constituency.
- 2A.5 Program and course objectives clearly specify the subject matter to be covered, the intellectual skills to be acquired and learning methods used, the affective and creative capabilities to be developed, and the specific occupational skills to be mastered.
- 2A.6 Programs and courses are offered in a manner which ensures students the opportunity to complete the entire program as announced, within a reasonable period of time.
- 2A.7 The institution has an administrative structure responsible for the overall coordination and administration of instruction.

Standard 2B Curriculum Planning and Evaluation

Curriculum planning is designed to achieve the aims of the institution. Curriculum planning considers current and future needs for human, financial, and physical

resources. This systematic planning is based on continuing institutional self-evaluation and assessment of the needs of the institution's constituencies. All appropriate segments of the institution are involved in planning.

- 2B.1 The responsibility for design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum is vested in designated bodies with clearly established channels of communication and control. The faculty has a major role in such processes.
- 2B.2 The institution engages in periodic review of program and departmental quality and effectiveness under clearly specified and demonstrably implemented procedures. The process is based on current qualitative and quantitative data which are used to assess strengths and weaknesses in achieving program purposes and projected outcomes. (See Standard 1D)
- 2B.3 Policies and procedures for additions and deletions of programs or courses are carefully developed and administered, are based on curriculum planning, and are consistent with the resources of the institution, the capabilities of faculty, and the needs of the community served by the institution.

Standard 2C General Education

The educational program is designed to give students a substantial and coherent exposure to the major broad domains of higher education. All programs leading to the Associate degree include a major area and a general education component.

- 2C.1 The general education segment of all educational programs is based on a philosophy and rationale that are clearly stated and provides the criteria by which the appropriateness of each course in the general education component is evaluated.
- 2C.2 The plan for general education is cooperatively developed by faculty and administrative staff and approved by the governing board.
- 2C.3 The general education program introduces the content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge -- the humanities, the fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences -- and helps students to develop the intellectual skills and social attitudes that will make them effective learners and citizens.
- 2C.4 The educational program provides opportunities for all students to develop and demonstrate competence in communication and quantitative skills, critical analysis of data and argument, and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Standard 2D Special Programs Offering Courses for Credit

All special courses and programs which include courses for credit whether conducted on-or off-campus are integral parts of the institution; their functions, goals and objectives are consistent with other elements of the institution; they maintain the same academic standards as regular campus programs; and they are planned and evaluated by the same processes as the regular educational program.

The college is solely responsible for the academic and fiscal integrity of all instructional programs and courses which bear the institution's name.

The provisions of Standard 2D apply to:

- Courses taught by non-traditional delivery systems such as television, correspondence, newspaper, video or audio tape, radio, modularized instruction, and computer assisted learning. (See policy, pages 46-47)
- Contract education courses taught for credit.
- All international education programs. (See policy, pages 52-55)
- All practices providing credit for prior experiential learning. (See policy, pages 49-50)
- All credit courses or programs taught under contract by an outside institution. (See policy, pages 57-60)
- Work experience and cooperative education courses.
- Courses offered through independent study.
- Programs offered on military bases.

Standard 2E Credit for Student Achievement

Evaluation of student learning or achievement and the award of credit are based upon clearly stated and distinguishable criteria.

- 2E.1 Student performance is evaluated in terms of defined and published course requirements.
- 2E.2 Criteria for evaluating student performance or achievement, *i.e.*, grades (A, B, C, etc.) are clearly established, stated in college publications, and are generally understood by faculty and students.
- 2E.3 Credit awarded is consistent with student learning or achievement and based upon generally accepted norms or equivalencies. (See Glossary)

- 2E.4 The degree, certificate, or diploma awarded upon successful completion of an educational program is appropriate to the demonstrated achievement of the graduate.
- 2E.5 Clear and well-publicized distinctions are made between courses which offer degree and non-degree credit.
- 2E.6 Any credit for prior experiential learning is awarded and limited in accordance with Commission policy. (See Commission policy on "Credit for Prior Experiential Learning in Undergraduate Programs")

Standard 2F Articulation

The institution has a systematic procedure for articulating its programs with secondary schools, baccalaureate institutions, and with employers who hire occupational students.

- 2F.1 The curriculum planning process involves liaison with secondary schools, particularly in sequence courses. Where articulation agreements exist, high schools of origin receive reports on student performance.
- 2F.2 The curriculum planning process involves coordination with baccalaureate institutions, particularly with respect to major and general education requirements. Data about the number, performance, satisfaction, and adequacy of preparation of transfer students are systematically collected and reviewed.
- 2F.3 The relevance of courses to job requirements is ensured by a systematic analysis of specific job requirements and curriculum review.
- 2F.4 Follow-up studies of transfer and occupational students are conducted regularly to evaluate the level of performance or job placement.

Standard 2G Non-Credit Courses and Programs

Non-credit courses and programs, whether offered on- or off-campus, are integral to the educational mission of the institution.

- 2G.1 Planning for and evaluation of non-credit courses and programs is comparable to planning and evaluation for other programs of the institution.

- 2G.2 Programs are administered under stated and well publicized institutional policies and procedures.
- 2G.3 Policies governing non-credit courses and programs are described in appropriate institutional publications.
- 2G.4 There is demonstrable coordination with institutional credit programs.

Standard 2H Community Education and Services

Community Education and Services, if recognized as an institutional objective, respond to local needs for lifelong learning by providing avocational classes, classes for the business and professional community, non-credit contract education courses, cultural events, and community and civic functions.

- 2H.1 Community education classes are part of the educational program and are coordinated with the credit and non-credit program.
- 2H.2 Community liaison is effectively developed and maintained in order to determine community interests and needs and to evaluate offerings.
- 2H.3 Institutional policies and procedures establish conditions under which college facilities may be used by the public.

Supporting Documentation for Standard Two

1. Description of curriculum-development bodies and recent minutes.
2. Self study and evaluation reports from external reviews and the most recent professional and institutional accreditation visits and documentation of resulting actions.
3. Course outlines and objectives for all programs.
4. Written philosophy and rationale for the general education program.
5. Articulation agreements.
6. Follow up studies on transfer and vocational students.
7. Program advisory committee rosters and recent minutes.

- (x) 8. Summary listing of off-campus programs, directors, sites, and enrollments.
- 9. Catalogs, brochures, announcements, and class schedules for special programs and Community Education programs.
- 10. Policies regarding the award of credit based on prior experiential learning, including a report on the amount of such credit awarded for the past two years.
- 11. A copy of each Memorandum of Understanding for programs offered on military bases or for military agencies.
- 12. Copies of brochures and announcements and any contractual agreements with other institutions or travel agencies for study abroad or study-travel programs.
- 13. Contracts with other organizations that provide instruction for the college.

STANDARD THREE: STUDENT SERVICES AND THE CO-CURRICULAR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The institution establishes and maintains an environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of students. Student services reflect an institutional concern for students' physical and mental health, facilitates educational progress, and helps students to relate to others in the institutional community.

Standard 3A General Provisions

Established policies and practices make clear the institution's obligations to students and the obligations of students to the institution.

- 3A.1 The institution systematically studies the characteristics and identifies the learning and counseling needs of the student population.
- 3A.2 The institution has an organized system for admission, assessment, orientation, counseling and advisement, and student follow up.
- 3A.3 The institution involves students in the planning, development, and delivery of student services.
- 3A.4 Policies on student rights and responsibilities, including the rights of due process and redress of grievances and rules defining inappropriate student conduct, are clearly stated, well-publicized, and readily available and they are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- 3A.5 Publications (e.g., student handbooks) describing relevant policies and procedures, student services and programs, student government and activities are readily available.
- 3A.6 The institution supports opportunities for student participation and leadership in campus organizations and student involvement in institutional governance.
- 3A.7 Counseling and other appropriate academic support services are offered to day and evening students on and off campus.
- 3A.8 Staffing, resources, and physical facilities are commensurate with the size of the institution and with its stated purposes.

Standard 3B Admissions and Records

An admission, registration, and records service facilitates student access to the institution and keeps and protects the records of their participation.

3B.1 Standards for admission, including provisions for exceptional cases, are based upon norms of expectation generally recognized in postsecondary education, and are consistent with the institution's educational purposes. Test instruments used in the admission process are designed to minimize cultural bias and are evaluated to assure their validity.

3B.2 The institution actively seeks diversity in its student body.

3B.3 The institution makes provision for the security of student records of admission and progress. Student records, including transcripts, are private, accurate, complete, and permanent. They are protected by fireproof and otherwise safe storage and backed by duplicate files. Data and records maintained in computing systems have adequate security and provision for recovery from disasters.

If an institution closes, provision is made for the future security and accessibility of academic records. (See COPA policy on "Considerations When Closing a Postsecondary Educational Institution," pages 79-83.)

3B.4 Transfer credit is accepted from accredited institutions or from other institutions under procedures which provide adequate safeguards to ensure academic quality and relevance to the student's program. Implementation of transfer credit is consistent with the Commission Policy on Transfer and Award of Academic Credit.

3B.5 The institution has a policy regarding fee refunds that is well-publicized, uniformly administered, and consistent with customary standards.

Standard 3C Comprehensiveness of Services

Depending on the nature and needs of the student body and the purposes of the institution a range of student services may be provided. Decisions on comprehensiveness of services depend on the purposes of the institution, the diversity of its student body, and whether students commute or live in campus residential facilities. The functions, goals, and objectives of each service are consistent with those of the institution. Each is planned and evaluated by the same established processes as are other parts of the institution's major programs and services.

The provisions of Standard 3C apply to student services such as:

- Career placement services.
- Special services to disadvantaged students.
- Special services to disabled students.
- Tutorial services.
- The student activities program.
- The student financial aid program.
- Child care services.
- Athletics.
- Veterans services.
- International student services.
- Services for reentry students.
- Student health services.
- Psychological services.
- Student housing, if provided.
- Food services.
- Student bookstore.

Standard 3D Counseling Services

A systematic program of counseling and academic advisement assists students in making appropriate decisions.

3D.1 The institution provides an organized and functioning counseling program which includes, but is not limited to:

- Academic counseling.
- Career counseling.

- Identification of potential barriers to progress and strategies to overcome them.
- Counseling of students on probation.
- Referral to appropriate support services and agencies.
- Counseling of student populations with special needs.

3D.2 A structured system of academic advisement is available to all students.

Standard 3E Coordination and Administration

The institution has an administrative structure responsible for the overall coordination and administration of student services.

- 3E.1 Student services professionals and support staff are qualified to provide effective service.
- 3E.2 Arrangements are in place which assure that student services faculty, teaching faculty, and students are involved in the processes of program and policy development for student services, and in systematic evaluation and planning for programs and services of the institution.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR STANDARD THREE

1. Student Handbook.
- (x) 2. Summaries of student characteristics that will give the reader a concept of the nature of the student body.
- (x) 3. Organization chart for student services.
4. Sample copies of student publications.
5. Policies on student conduct, rights, and responsibilities.
6. Policies on athletics.
7. Policies on student fees.
8. Statistics on student financial aid.

9. The most recent financial aid reviews conducted by state and federal agencies.
10. Any program review documents for student services.
11. Catalog, brochures, and other documents prepared by the institution to recruit or inform students.
12. The institution's matriculation plan (California Community Colleges).

STANDARD FOUR: FACULTY AND STAFF

The categories of those who are employed by a postsecondary institution vary substantially from one institution to another, but typically include those who teach, those in student services, those in learning resources, paraprofessionals, support personnel, and administrative staff and includes persons employed on full time and part time basis. The institution demonstrates its commitment to the increasingly significant educational role played by diversity of ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds among its members by making positive efforts to foster such diversity.

Standard 4A Selection

- 4A.1 Each category of staff is sufficient in number and diversity of preparation to provide effective instruction, student services, support services, learning resources, and administration.
- 4A.2 Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for the selection of all personnel are clearly stated, public, and directly related to institutional objectives. Job descriptions are available for all staff positions and are adhered to in all selection procedures.
- 4A.3 Teaching effectiveness is the principal criterion for the selection of the teaching faculty.
- 4A.4 A written policy exists to ensure equity in all employment procedures. That policy is consistent with Accrediting Commission policy on non-discrimination and affirmative action. Consistent attention is paid to the meeting of the institution's affirmative action or diversity goals.

Standard 4B Qualifications of Staff

- 4B.1 All members of the staff, including faculty, paraprofessionals, support staff and administrators, are qualified by academic background and experience to carry out their institutional and program responsibilities in accord with the purposes of the institution.

Standard 4C Evaluation

- 4C.1 The evaluation of each category of staff is systematic and conducted at stated intervals. The follow-up of all evaluations is formal, systematic, and timely.

- 4C.2 Evaluation processes seek to assess effectiveness and encourage improvement.
- 4C.3 Teaching excellence is the principal criterion for the retention of teaching faculty.

Standard 4D Staff Development

- 4D.1 Members of the faculty, administration, and support staff remain current in their field of expertise.
- 4D.2 Development opportunities are planned for each staff category with the participation of that staff and are available to all and supported by the administration and the governing board.
- 4D.3 Faculty, administration, and staff members engage in professional activity supported by the institution.

Standard 4E Other Personnel Policies

- 4E.1 Personnel policies and procedures affecting staff are clear, equitable, and available for information and review.
- 4E.2 Criteria for determining work loads are clearly stated and equitably applied.
- 4E.3 There are systematic processes for the development of personnel policies.
- 4E.4 Procedures and criteria for personnel appointment, evaluation, retention, advancement, and due processes are explicitly stated.
- 4E.5 Policy regarding privacy of information is clearly stated and consistently administered.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR STANDARD FOUR

- (x)
 - 1. Ethnic and gender distribution of faculty and administration (full and part-time).
 - 2. Faculty handbook, including personnel policies and procedures.
 - 3. Collective bargaining agreements.

4. List of faculty, with degrees earned, unless catalog list is up to date.
5. Staff handbook.
6. Salary schedules.
7. Affirmative action policy and plan.
8. Criteria and procedures for employing, evaluating, and compensating faculty in special programs such as off-campus, study abroad, study travel, non-credit programs, and programs provided by contract with other organizations.
9. Doctrinal statements required for employment, if any (church-related institutions).
10. Policies and procedures for evaluation of faculty, administrators, and support staff.
11. Documents describing staff development activities.
12. Criteria and procedures for selection of faculty and administrators.

STANDARD FIVE: LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES

The college provides those learning resources necessary to support the educational program and the intellectual and cultural development of staff and students, day and evening, on and off-campus. The adequacy of an institution's learning resources is judged in terms of its goals and programs. The effectiveness of an institution's learning resources is judged by how well and how much they are actually used.

Learning resources include the library and its collections, learning laboratories and centers, other collections of materials that support teaching and learning, instructional technology and support services, distribution and maintenance systems for equipment and materials, instructional information systems, instructional computers and software, telecommunications and other instructional media, and the facilities that house such equipment and services.

Standard 5A General Provisions

- 5A.1 Library holdings, media resources, facilities, and staff are sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, and currentness to support the institution's educational offerings.
- 5A.2 The library collection and other learning resources are adequately supported in relation to the total budget and needs of the institution.
- 5A.3 Learning resources are designed to provide support for varying modes of instruction appropriate to students' needs and learning styles and are augmented to serve curricular changes.
- 5A.4 Technical assistance is provided to faculty in the production of tests, syllabi, audio-visual programs, and other instructional materials.
- 5A.5 Learning resources equipment is properly maintained.

Standard 5B Resource Development

- 5B.1 There is an organized procedure in which faculty and administrators participate in the selection, evaluation, and elimination of library holdings, learning resources, and materials.
- 5B.2 Faculty and staff are kept informed about new developments in learning technologies.

Standard 5C Accessibility

- 5C.1 Use of the library and other resources is promoted through a comprehensive program of orientation, instruction, and printed material designed to assure substantial use of these resources by students, staff, and faculty. Attention is given to the needs of both traditional and nontraditional students.
- 5C.2 Learning resources are available to students at off-campus centers for both day and evening students.
- 5C.3 Hours of service provide adequate access to learning resources.
- 5C.4 Where reliance is placed on the resources of another institution or organization, the arrangement is clearly delineated in a written agreement.

Standard 5D Faculty and Staff

- 5D.1 Learning resource staff are sufficient in number and properly qualified in various specialty areas to serve users and to provide technical support. (See Standard 3)

Standard 5E Information Technology

- 5E.1 Computing and data communications services are provided as learning resources in sufficient quality and quantity to support the educational offerings of the institution.
- 5E.2 The institution provides service to support full utilization of its information technology resources.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR STANDARD FIVE

- 1. Budget for the library.
- 2. Statistics on use of library and learning resources.
- 3. Data on user satisfaction.
- 4. Data concerning number and assignment of staff to support learning resources.

5. Curriculum materials for bibliographic instruction.
6. Printed materials that describe for students the hours and services provided by learning resources.
7. Formal, written agreements with other libraries.
8. Collection development and weeding policies.
9. List of data bases to which students and faculty have access through the library.

STANDARD SIX: PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Physical resources, including buildings and equipment used both on and off-campus, are adequate to serve the needs of the institution in relation to its stated purpose and its goals and activities. The physical environment of the institution contributes to an atmosphere for effective learning.

Standard 6A Facilities

- 6A.1 Space allocations are appropriate and adequate for the institutional functions served.
- 6A.2 Buildings and grounds are clean and in good repair. Maintenance and operations are conducted in a systematic, planned manner with adequate staff and support.
- 6A.3 There are well-planned, adequate, and well-maintained physical facilities for off-campus programs.
- 6A.4 There is demonstrated concern for safety, security, disaster planning, and energy conservation.
- 6A.5 There is concern for health issues, barrier-free access, and environmental standards related to hazardous materials and waste.

Standard 6B Equipment

- 6B.1 Equipment is appropriate for the institutional functions served.
- 6B.2 Equipment is maintained on a regular basis and attention is given to the safety-health-security aspects of equipment operation and maintenance.
- 6B.3 Equipment is adequately inventoried and controlled and periodic replacement is scheduled.

Standard 6C Facilities Planning

- 6C.1 There is a master plan for campus development, consistent with the objectives of the institution and the educational master plan.
- 6C.2 There is appropriate involvement of staff in the planning of facilities.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR STANDARD SIX

1. The master plan for campus development.
2. Policies on safety, security, and energy conservation which are related to physical facilities and equipment.
3. Equipment inventory and replacement policy.

STANDARD SEVEN: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Standard 7A Financial Stability

Financial resources are sufficient to achieve, maintain, and enhance the goals and objectives of the college. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of financial viability and improvement. Financial management exhibits sound budgeting and accounting. Financial planning is based on institutional planning involving the governing board and broad staff participation.

- 7A.1 Current and anticipated income is adequate to maintain high quality programs and services.
- 7A.2 Plans exist for the payment of long-term liabilities.
- 7A.3 Cash flow provision and/or reserves are sufficient to provide fiscal stability and to meet the needs of the institution.

Standard 7B Financial Planning

- 7B.1 Financial planning is based upon the educational master plan and provides for staff participation and budget approval by the governing board.
- 7B.2 The policies, guidelines, and processes for developing the budget are clearly defined and followed.
- 7B.3 Financial planning takes into account long-range projections regarding programs, services, costs, and resources.

Standard 7C Financial Management

- 7C.1 The organization for financial administration is clearly defined.
- 7C.2 Financial reports are timely and accurate and are routinely distributed and reviewed.
- 7C.3 The institution has policies and programs on risk management which address loss by fire and theft and liability for personal injury and property damage.
- 7C.4 The institution's financial records and internal control processes are subjected to an annual audit by an independent certified public accountant.

- 7C.5 Auxiliary organizations or foundations using the name of the institution conform with institutional principles of operation and support institutional goals. Their activities are carefully monitored and their financial records are regularly reviewed by an independent auditor. The institution retains appropriate responsibility and control over such organizations.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR STANDARD SEVEN*

1. Institutional budget.
2. Institutional financial plan.
3. Latest report of the independent auditor.
4. Documents illustrating budgetary control.
5. Foundation documents.
6. Auxiliary organization documents.

* Institutions that are part of multi-unit systems or districts should provide documents pertaining both to the campus/college budget and to the system/district budget.

STANDARD EIGHT: GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Postsecondary education has a tradition of broadly shared authority and responsibility. For an institution to serve its purposes and achieve its goals each major constituency must carry out its separate but complementary roles and responsibilities. Institutional governance mechanisms provide the means through which policy is developed and authority is assigned, delegated, and shared in a climate of mutual support.

Standard 8A The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution. It selects a chief executive officer, approves the purposes of the institution, and responsibly manages available fiscal resources. It establishes broad institutional policies and delegates to the chief executive officer the responsibility to administer these policies. There is a clear differentiation between the policy-making function of the board and executive responsibilities. The board protects the institution from external pressures and provides stability and continuity to the institution.

- 8A.1 The board includes adequate representation of the public interest and the diverse elements of the population it represents. Arrangements provide for the continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.
- 8A.2 Board policies include a statement of ethical conduct for its members. The board acts as a whole; no member or committee acts in place of the board. Board policy precludes participation of any of its members or any member of the staff in actions involving possible conflict of interest.
- 8A.3 The board is responsible for the financial soundness of the institution and ensures that the educational program and the physical facility plans are of high quality and consistent with institutional purposes.
- 8A.4 The board reviews and approves educational programs, and ensures that programs, degrees, and certificates are of satisfactory quality, consistent with institutional purposes.
- 8A.5 The board approves an effective organization which serves institutional purposes.
- 8A.6 After appropriate consultation, the board selects and provides regular evaluation of the institution's chief executive officer.
- 8A.7 The board has a process by which its own performance can be assessed.

8A.8 The board is informed about and involved in the accreditation process.

8A.9 In multi-campus systems, division of responsibility and authority between the system office and the institution is clear; system policies and procedures are clearly defined and equitably administered.

Note: For institutions in multi-unit systems, standards 8B and 8C are separately applicable to the college and the system. The institutional self study shall include separate sections in which the college executive and administration and the system executive and administration are evaluated.

Standard 8B Chief Executive Officer

The chief executive officer is the educational leader and provides necessary leadership to define goals, develop plans, and establish priorities for the institution. The role of the chief executive is central to the operation of the institution. The chief executive officer's full-time responsibility is to the institution.

Note: For institutions in multi-unit systems, the standards are separately applicable to the institutional chief executive and the system executive.

8B.1 The chief executive fosters appropriate communication among the governing board, staff, and students.

8B.2 The chief executive has ensured that college policies and procedures are clearly defined, known to the college community, and equitably administered.

8B.3 The chief executive efficiently manages resources, implements priorities controlling budget and expenditures, and ensures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and board policies.

8B.4 The chief executive supports an effective affirmative action policy for staff and students.

8B.5 If the institution is part of a state system the chief executive establishes and maintains an effective working relationship with the state system administration.

Standard 8C Administrative Services

The administration is organized and staffed to provide leadership which makes possible an effective teaching and learning environment for the achievement of institutional purposes and goals.

- 8C.1 The administration supports a decision-making process which is timely and which involves persons in the process who will be affected by the decisions.
- 8C.2 The administration provides leadership and encouragement to the faculty in the improvement of instruction through methods such as the use of classroom research, educational technology, and innovative methods of instruction.
- 8C.3 The administration assures that institutional research is conducted and that the results are provided to the faculty and the governing board.
- 8C.4 The administration is organized and staffed to reflect institutional purposes, size, and complexity, and to provide economical and effective management.

Standard 8D Faculty

- 8D.1 The faculty have established and participate in an effective academic or faculty senate or, in the case of private colleges, a formal process for providing input in institutional governance. This faculty organization is able to carry on its responsibilities for academic and professional matters at the college. The college provides support to the faculty to enable it to meet its responsibilities. Appropriate delegation of authority takes place from the local governing board.
- 8D.2 The role and responsibility of the faculty, through its academic senate or faculty organization, is clearly defined in written policy.
- 8D.3 The role and participation of the faculty on various policy-making, planning, and special purpose bodies is clearly stated in written policy.
- 8D.4 The faculty have and exercise a substantial voice in matters of educational program, faculty personnel, and other matters of institutional policy which relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise.

- 8D.5 It is considered part of each faculty member's professional responsibility to participate in committees and the governance structure of the institution.
- 8D.6 Where appropriate, there exists a workable written delineation of functions between the bargaining agent and the senate.
- 8D.7 (For multi-college systems only.) If the system is served by a system or district senate, the relationship between the college and district senate and the relationship between the district senate and the governing board are clearly defined.

Standard 8E Support Staff

- 8E.1 An organization of support staff personnel, if established, has well-defined responsibilities and functions.
- 8E.2 The role of the support staff in various governing, planning, budgeting, and policy-making bodies is made clear and public.
- 8E.3 There exists a well-developed program of staff development for the support staff.

Standard 8F Students

- 8F.1 A student governing body, if established, has well-defined responsibilities and functions.
- 8F.2 The role of students in various governing, planning, budgeting, and policy-making bodies is made clear and public.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR STANDARD EIGHT*

- 1. Board policy manual.
- (X) 2. Chart of the administrative organization.
- 3. Manual of administrative procedures.
- 4. Faculty handbook.
- 5. Constitution and bylaws of the faculty senate.
- 6. Student handbook or informational brochures.

* In multi-unit systems, documents should be provided for both the campus/college and the system/district organizations.

PART III

COMMISSION POLICIES

TESTIMONIAL POLICIES

Testimonial Policies have been adopted by the Commission as public position statements. Testimonial policies define good practice in more detail than do the accreditation standards, and are intended to offer guidance to member institutions and to the Commission itself. Such policies are adopted after broad consultation among member institutions and with other agencies that make up the regional accrediting community.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

(Adopted October 1973, Revised January 1987)

Commission

It is the policy of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges to actively seek representative membership on evaluation teams and on the Commission itself. Each year this policy will be brought to the attention of the Nominating Committee.

Institutions

The Commission expects member institutions to build faculty and staff in a manner which contributes to an increase of employment opportunities for underrepresented groups.

It is the responsibility of educational institutions to meet the educational needs of all groups including disadvantaged and minority groups. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges expects member institutions to pursue practices that give access to all individuals and recognize the special needs of disadvantaged and minority persons.

PURPOSES OF INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

(Adopted October 1972)

Institutional accreditation at the postsecondary level is a means used by regional accrediting commissions for purposes of:

1. Fostering excellence in postsecondary education through the development of criteria and guidelines for assessing educational effectiveness.
2. Encouraging institutional improvement of educational endeavors through continuous self study and evaluation.
3. Assuring the educational community, the general public, and other agencies or organizations that an institution has clearly-defined and appropriate educational objectives, has established conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected, appears in fact to be accomplishing them substantially, and is so organized, staffed, and supported that it can be expected to continue to do so.
4. Providing counsel and assistance to established and developing institutions.
5. Protecting institutions against encroachments which might jeopardize their educational effectiveness or academic freedom.

Accreditation is attained through a process of evaluation and periodic review of total institutions conducted by regional commissions in accord with national policies and procedures.

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

(Adopted October 1966, Revised January 1978)

By academic tradition and by philosophical principle an institution of post-secondary education is committed to the pursuit of truth and to its communication to others.

To carry out this essential commitment calls for institutional integrity in the way an institution manages its affairs--specifies its goals, selects and retains its faculty, admits students, establishes curricula, determines programs of research, fixes its fields of service.

The maintenance and exercises of such institutional integrity postulates and requires appropriate autonomy and freedom.

Put positively this is the freedom to examine data, to question assumptions, to be guided by evidence, to teach what one knows--to be a learner and a scholar. Put negatively this is a freedom from unwarranted harassment which hinders or prevents an institution from getting on with its essential work.

An educational institution must be managed well and remain solvent, but it is not a business nor an industry. It must be concerned with the needs of its community and state and country, but it is not a political party nor a social service. It must be morally responsible, but even when church-related, it is not a religion nor a church. Those within it have as a first concern evidence and truth rather than particular judgments of institutional benefactors, concerns of church people, public opinion, social pressure, or political proscription.

Relating to this general concern and corresponding to intellectual and academic freedom are correlative responsibilities. On the part of trustees and administrators there is the obligation to protect faculty and students from inappropriate pressures or destructive harassments.

On the part of the faculty there is the obligation to distinguish personal conviction from proven conclusions and to present relevant data fairly to students because this same freedom asserts their rights to know the facts.

On the part of the students there is the obligation to question, and to be actively involved in the life of the institution. The determination and exercise of proper responsibilities will be related to the students' status as undergraduate, professional, or graduate students.

Intellectual freedom does not rule out commitment; rather it makes it possible and personal. Freedom does not require neutrality on the part of the individual nor the educational institution--certainly not toward the task of inquiry and

learning, nor toward the value systems which may guide them as persons or as schools.

Hence, institutions may hold to a particular political, social, or religious philosophy as may individual faculty members or students. But to be true to what they profess academically, individuals and institutions must remain intellectually free and allow others the same freedom to pursue truth and to distinguish the pursuit of it from a commitment to it.

All concerned with the good of postsecondary educational institutions will seek ways to support their institutional integrity and the exercises of their appropriate autonomy and freedom. The regional commissions, which have a particular responsibility to look at an institution in its totality, will always give serious attention to this aspect and quality of institutional life so necessary for its well-being and vitality.

ACCREDITATION AND NONTRADITIONAL STUDY

(Adopted March 1973)

Accreditation procedures for nontraditional programs should encourage innovative and imaginative approaches to providing quality education whether in new institutions or in those already accredited. The accrediting process generally should move toward assessment of the results of education rather than its processes, and developments in nontraditional studies and degrees provide opportunities to do so. At the same time, the regional accrediting commissions emphasize that accreditation is concerned with institutional improvement and that attention to outcomes only, without considering the relation of these to the environments and educational processes, would be of little assistance to either traditional or nontraditional programs in raising questions and providing suggestions for improvement.

The commissions believe that, at this early stage in the development of non-traditional degree programs, the principles, policies, and procedures specified for accreditation must be flexible and of an interim nature. As the nature of innovative developments becomes clarified and experience is gained in working with them, accreditation policies and procedures can be adjusted to attain a uniform approach to the traditional and the innovative in such manner that the better procedures of each are called to the attention of both. In this context, the statement of policies and principles presented here is tentative and interim. It is a working set of guidelines which will require continued monitoring, clarification, and revision as experience in their application evolves.

General Policies

1. Accreditation will be considered only when a number of individuals have been granted or have qualified for a degree by various nontraditional patterns indicated. Consideration of students' completed programs and student reactions are deemed indispensable to accreditation.
2. Accreditation procedures and criteria should be comprehensive, flexible, and fair. Evaluation committees should include persons who have experience in nontraditional programs and/or who are sufficiently conversant and understanding to review innovations competently.
3. An institution which, by the nature of its program, abandons or renders nonfunctional traditional criteria and mechanisms of review and control aimed at assuring quality must accept responsibility for indicating alternative ways in which quality will be assured.

Guidelines

1. When degrees based heavily on nontraditional patterns of study are offered,

evidence will be required that the degrees are awarded on the basis of definite criteria and demonstrated competency commensurate with the level and nature of the degrees.

2. The appraisal, evaluation, or examination procedures of an institution must be conducted with a high degree of objectivity, with due regard for maintenance of honesty and security, and with explicit statements of criteria and standards for judging satisfactory performance. The learner's self-appraisal of the worth of an experience is a valuable but not sufficient basis for awarding credit or a degree.
3. Publicity statements to prospective students must be factual. For example, actual services provided must be consistent with publicity. This will require monitoring adjunct professors to assure that they fulfill their commitments.
4. To protect the integrity of the faculty-institution work relationship and to avoid circumstances involving conflict of interest, policies regarding the amount of outside work for pay, and safeguards surrounding use of institutional resources and facilities for their intended purposes are required. The relationship of full-time faculty serving as adjunct faculty or program advisers and using the learning resources and facilities of their full-time employer for programs of study offered by other institutions (accredited or unaccredited) should conform to their institution's policies and standards on these matters.
5. The conditions and circumstances of subcontracts with adjunct faculty in the community, with museums, art institutes, libraries, government agencies, foreign study institutions, and other diverse learning facilities, should be made explicit and should be in conformity with the policies and standards of the institutions on such matters. They should be accompanied by a description of the means to be used for documenting and evaluating the work done by the student in reference to the objectives of the programs of study.
6. The conditions and circumstances of subcontracts by unaccredited institutions with accredited institutions for use by students of their learning resources, facilities, and degree-granting prerogatives should be made explicit. They should also be in conformity with the usual institutional policies and procedures safeguarding their intended use and with the guidelines on "Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations."

The concern here is both with the placement of responsibility, the use and availability of resources, and the relation between student charges, services rendered, and benefits acquired.

GENERAL EDUCATION IN SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS AND INSTITUTIONS

(Adopted March 1973, Revised June 1987)

This policy expresses a principle of general education which is considered to be a desirable characteristic of postsecondary* institutions both for degree and non-degree programs. By design, the policy is qualitative rather than quantitative. No formula for specific application or particular pattern of general education is endorsed, since this determination is considered to be the obligation of the institution.

General education is recognized as an important component of comprehensive postsecondary educational programs. Postsecondary institutions should identify and provide a recognizable core of general education consistent with the educational philosophy of the institution for each degree program or cluster of degree programs. In some cases, institutions may provide for general education degree requirements through admission prerequisites or transfer of units. Institutions should include a concern for general education in non-degree specialized programs.

General education introduces the content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge in order to develop the mental skills and social attitudes that will help people to become effective learners, workers, and citizens. General education may be taught in different ways. An institution must determine whether its student are better served by curricula or requirements that approach the disciplines through content and methodology, or that approach the disciplines by concentrating on outcomes. Expected outcomes should be stated in relation to the institution's purposes.

Programs in postsecondary specialized institutions need to demonstrate an appropriate level of mastery in occupations and technologies and should also strive for the development of student character and the preparation of students to live in the world. Programs need to develop within students the capabilities of forming independent judgments, weighing values, and understanding fundamental theory, in addition to amassing facts and mastering skills. The institutional effort in helping its students become contributing and useful members of society should be demonstrated in the performance of the institution's graduates. General education, as well as specialized subjects, should be taught by faculty who are qualified in the subject being taught.

General education designed specifically for specialized programs should be clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution.

*Postsecondary education consists of those educational experiences available to persons who have completed secondary school requirements or who are of post high school age.

CREDIT FOR PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

(Adopted June 1980, Revised June 1990)

It is the position of the Commission that the academy has a significant role beyond that of certifying what a student has learned elsewhere. It is within the academy that a student earns academic degrees.

Credit for prior experiential learning is offered only under the conditions enumerated below. This policy is not designed to apply to such practices as CLEP, advanced placement, or ACE evaluated military credit. Questions about this policy should be referred to Commission staff.

In developing and publishing its guidelines and procedures, it is suggested that institutions follow the principles of good practice in assessing experiential learning represented by the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL)* and the American Council on Education.**

1. Before credit for prior experiential learning becomes part of the student's permanent record, the student completes, at the credit-granting institution, a sufficient number of units to establish evidence of a satisfactory learning pattern.
2. Portfolio-based credit for prior experiential learning is awarded for no more than 30 semester units, or the equivalent, toward the Associate Degree. Credit is awarded only for documented learning which ties the prior experience to the theories and data of the relevant academic field.
3. Credit is awarded only in areas which fall within the regular curricular offerings of the institution and are part of the instructional program the student completes.
4. Institutions using documentation and interviews in lieu of examinations, demonstrate that the documentation provides academic assurances of equivalency to credit earned by traditional means.
5. No assurances are made in advance regarding the number of credits to be awarded.

*Willingham, Warren W. Principles of Good Practice in Assessing Experiential Learning. CAEL, American City Building, Suite 40-3, Columbia, MD 21044, 1977.

**American Council on Education. "Principles of Good Practice for Alternative and External Degree Programs for Adults." ACE, Publications Department A, One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036, 1990.

6. Credit is awarded only by faculty holding regular appointments in the appropriate discipline. The awarding of credit, and the determination of the amount of such credit, is made by qualified faculty members. The faculty ensures that assessment procedures are appropriate for the credit awarded.
7. Only college level learning is creditable, consistent with the academic standards of the institution.
8. Credit is only awarded to matriculated students and is identified on the student's transcript as "credit for prior experiential learning." The institution is prepared, on request from another institution, to furnish full documentation showing how such learning was evaluated and the basis on which such credit was awarded.
9. Steps are taken to ensure that credit for prior experiential learning does not duplicate credit already awarded or remaining courses planned for the student's academic program.
10. Policies and procedures for awarding experiential learning credit are adopted, described in appropriate institutional publications, and reviewed at regular intervals.
11. Fees charged are realistically related to the cost of the program. Adequate precautions are provided to ensure that payment of fees does not influence the award of credit.

COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

(Adopted January 1982)

The primary concern of an educational institution is its educational effectiveness. An evaluation of that effectiveness therefore rests upon the contribution of each of its programs toward achieving the educational objectives of the institution as a whole.

Consequently the evaluation of collegiate athletics begins with the definition of the program's objectives. They need to be published, clearly understood, and faithfully observed as a guide for action. Obviously they must be consonant with the aims of the institution itself and with the fundamental purposes of higher education. Their emphasis should be upon the welfare of the participants and of as many of the other students as possible.

The statement of objectives should represent the concerted view of the faculty, administration, and trustees, and therefore should be prepared and approved cooperatively by all components. The objectives need to be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they represent the current position of the institution and sound educational policy, and that everyone concerned understands and is governed by them.

Sports and athletics of all kinds--intercollegiate, intramural, and recreational--are and will continue to be as rooted in our educational institutions as they are in American society. Thus, they deserve attention by the accrediting process as essential elements related to the quality and integrity of higher education. The issue is not whether there should be athletics programs, but rather that they be conducted in a manner consistent with an institution's published objectives and educational mission.

Intercollegiate programs should not be favored to the detriment of appropriate intramural and recreational athletics programs on a campus.

Organization

While organizational details such as status of coaches and athletic directors will vary with local conditions, ultimate responsibility for all programs rests with the chief executive officer of the institution and the governing board. In the institutional governance structure, the committee overseeing athletic programs should involve representatives of appropriate constituencies including faculty, students, and administrators.

Finance

All expenditures for an income from athletics, from whatever source, and the administration of scholarships, grants-in-aid, loans, and student employment, should be fully controlled by the institution and be included in its regular budgeting, accounting, and auditing procedures.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN
OVERSEAS INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
FOR NON-U.S. NATIONALS

Regional Institutional Accrediting Bodies
Council on Postsecondary Accreditation

February 1990

Preface

The Executive Directors of the regional institutional accrediting bodies of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation subscribe to the following principles of good practice in overseas international education programs for non-U.S. nationals. Each regional institutional accrediting body will apply these principles consistent with its own accrediting standards.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

Institutional Mission

1. The international program is rooted in the U.S. institution's stated mission and purposes and reflects any special social, religious, and ethical elements of that mission.
2. The faculty, administration, and governing board of the U.S. institution understand the relationship of the international program to the institution's stated mission and purposes.

Authorization

3. The international program has received all appropriate external approvals where required, including system administration, government bodies, and accrediting associations.
4. The international program has received all appropriate external approvals where required, including system administration, government bodies, and accrediting associations.
5. The U.S. institution documents the accepted legal basis for its operations in the host country.

Instructional Program

6. The U.S. institution specifies the educational needs to be met by its international program.
7. The content of the international educational program is subject to review by the U.S. institution's faculty.

8. The international education program reflects the educational emphasis of the U.S. institution, including a commitment to general education when appropriate.
9. The educational program is taught by faculty with appropriate academic preparation and language proficiencies, and whose credentials have been reviewed by the U.S. institution.
10. The standard of student achievement in the international program is equivalent to the standard of student achievement on the U.S. campus.
11. The international educational program where possible and appropriate is adapted to the culture of the host country.

Resources

12. The institution currently uses and assures the continuing use of adequate physical facilities for its international educational program, including classrooms, offices, libraries, and laboratories, and provides access to computer facilities where appropriate.
13. The U.S. institution has demonstrated its financial capacity to underwrite the international program without diminishing its financial support of the U.S. campus. Financing of the international program is incorporated into the regular budgeting and auditing process.

Admissions and Records

14. International students admitted abroad meet admissions requirements similar to those used for international students admitted to the U.S. campus, including appropriate language proficiencies.
15. The U.S. institution exercises control over recruitment and admission of students in the international program.
16. All international students admitted to the U.S. program are recognized as students of the U.S. institution.
17. All college-level academic credits earned in the international program are applicable to degree programs at the U.S. institution.
18. The U.S. institution maintains official records of academic credit earned in its international program.
19. The official transcript of record issued by the U.S. institution follows the institution's practices in identifying by site or through course numbering the credits earned in its off-campus programs.

Students

20. The U.S. institution assures that its institutional program provides a supportive environment for student development, consistent with the culture and mores of the international setting.
21. Students in the international program are fully informed as to services that will or will not be provided.

Control and Administration

22. The international program is controlled by the U.S. institution.
23. The teaching and administrative staff abroad responsible for the educational quality of the international program are accountable to a resident administrator of the U.S. institution.
24. The U.S. institution formally and regularly reviews all faculty and staff associated with its international program.
25. The U.S. institution assesses its international program on a regular basis in light of institutional goals and incorporates these outcomes into its regular planning process.

Ethics and Public Disclosure

26. The U.S. institution can provide to its accrediting agencies upon request a full accounting of the financing of its international program, including an accounting of funds designated for third parties within any contractual relationship.
27. The U.S. institution assures that all media presentations about the international program are factual, fair, and accurate.
28. The U.S. institution's primary catalog describes its international program.
29. The U.S. institution does not sell or franchise the rights to its name or its accreditation.
30. The U.S. institution assures that all references to transfer of academic credit reflects the reality of U.S. practice.
31. The U.S. institution assures that if U.S. accreditation is mentioned in materials related to the international program, the role and purpose of U.S. accreditation is fairly and accurately explained within these materials.

Contractual Arrangements

32. The official contract is in English and the primary language of the contracting institution.
33. The contract specifically provides that the U.S. institution controls the international program in conformity with these guidelines and the requirements of the U.S. institution's accreditations.
34. The U.S. institution confirms that the foreign party to the contract is legally qualified to enter into the contract.
35. The contract clearly states the legal jurisdiction under which its provisions will be interpreted will be that of the U.S. institution.
36. Conditions for program termination specified in the contract include appropriate protection for enrolled students.
37. All contractual arrangements must be consistent with the regional commissions' document, "Contractual Relationships With Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations."

Adopted February 12, 1990 by the Executive Directors of the Regional Institutional Accrediting Bodies:

Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

Commission Institutions of Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Commission on Vocational, Technical, and Career Institutions, New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

Commission on Colleges, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges

Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Commission on Occupational Education Institutions, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Adopted June 1, 1990 by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

ACCREDITATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

(Adopted January 1982, Revised June 1987)

The decision to enter into a collective bargaining agreement is institutional, governed by state laws for public institutions and federal laws for non-public institutions. The Accrediting Commission takes no position with respect to a decision to bargain collectively.

Regional accreditation is the educational community's means of self-regulation and institutional evaluation. The process of accreditation provides for validation of the institution's effectiveness in meeting its stated purposes and fulfilling its responsibilities.

In evaluating institutions which have collective bargaining agreements,* the institutional self study, the evaluation team and those responsible for accreditation decisions must consider the relationship of collective bargaining to the quality and effectiveness of the institution. To this end, the Commission requests:

1. Participation by representatives of the entire campus community--administrators, faculty, and support staff--as well as appropriate involvement of trustees and students in the self study.
2. Assessment of the impact of policies and procedures resulting from collective bargaining on the quality and effectiveness of the institution, both by the self study committee and the evaluation team.

*The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has provided the following position statement on the respective roles of faculty senates and faculty bargaining units:

The coming of collective bargaining has, in many instances, divided the role of the faculty into two components, that of the faculty as employees, represented by a collective bargaining agent, and that of faculty in the traditional academic role, represented through faculty senates or faculty councils. All constituents involved in institutional governance need to recognize and delineate these differing roles of faculty representative bodies.

To the extent that the matter under consideration is one of wages, hours, working conditions, or for the general benefit of the faculty as employees, it is clearly in the province of the collective bargaining agent.

To the extent that a matter involves academic and professional issues related to the development and furtherance of educational policy, including, but not limited to, academic standards, accreditation, articulation, credentialing, curriculum, staff development, and student services, it is clearly within the province of academic senates or faculty councils. This, in no way, limits the consultation rights of bargaining agents where authorized by statute.

CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH
NON-REGIONALLY ACCREDITED ORGANIZATIONS

(Adopted March 1973)

No postsecondary educational institution accredited by a regional institutional accrediting commission can lend the prestige or authority of its accreditation to authenticate courses or programs offered under contract with organizations not so accredited unless it demonstrates adherence to the following principles:

1. The primary purpose of offering such a course or program is educational. (Although the primary purpose of the offering must be educational, what ancillary purposes also provide the foundation for the program or course such as auxiliary services, anticipated income, and public relations?)
2. Any course offered must be consistent with the institution's educational purpose and objectives as they were at the time of the last evaluation. If the institution alters its purpose and objectives, the regional commission must be notified and the policy on substantive change applied. (How does the institution define the specific relationship between the primary and ancillary purposes and the contracted service and how does it demonstrate its capability to attain these purposes?)
3. Courses to be offered and the value and level of their credit must be determined in accordance with established institutional procedures, and under the usual mechanisms of review. (What evidence exists that established institutional procedures have been followed?)
4. Courses offered for credit must remain under the sole and direct control of the sponsoring accredited institution, which exercises ultimate and continuing responsibility for the performance of these functions as reflected in the contract, with provisions to assure that conduct of the courses meets the standards of its regular programs as disclosed fully in the institution's publications, especially as these pertain to:
 - a. Recruitment and counseling of students.
 - b. Admission of students to courses and/or to the sponsoring institution where credit programs are pursued.
 - c. Instructions in the courses.
 - d. Evaluation of student progress.
 - e. Record keeping.
 - f. Tuition and/or fees charged, receipt and disbursement of funds, and refund policy.
 - g. Appointment and validation of credentials of faculty teaching the course.
 - h. Nature and location of courses.
 - i. Instructional resources, such as the library.

Additional data needed would include course outlines, syllabi, copies of exams, records of students, and evidence of equivalencies with established programs.

In establishing contractual arrangements with non-regionally accredited organizations, institutions are expected to utilize the following guidelines. The not-for-profit institution should establish that its tax-exempt status, as governed by state or federal regulations, will not be affected by such contractual arrangements with a for-profit organization.

The Contract

1. Should be executed only by duly designated officers of the institution and their counterparts in the contracting organization. While other faculty and administrative representatives will undoubtedly be involved in the contract negotiations, care should be taken to avoid implied or apparent power to execute the contract by unauthorized personnel.
2. Should establish a definite understanding between the institution and contractor regarding the work to be performed, the period of the agreement, and the conditions under which any possible renewal or renegotiation of the contract would take place.
3. Should clearly vest the ultimate responsibility for the performance of the necessary control functions for the educational offering with the accredited institution granting credit for the offering. Such performance responsibility by the credit-granting institution would minimally consist of adequate provision for review and approval of work performed in each functional area by the contractor.
4. Should clearly establish the responsibilities of the institution and contractor regarding:
 - a. Indirect costs
 - b. Approval of salaries
 - c. Equipment
 - d. Subcontracts and travel
 - e. Property ownership and accountability
 - f. Inventions and patents
 - g. Publications and copyrights
 - h. Accounting records and audits
 - i. Security
 - j. Termination costs
 - k. Tuition refund
 - l. Student records
 - m. Faculty facilities
 - n. Safety regulations
 - o. Insurance coverage

Enrollment Agreement

1. The enrollment agreement should clearly outline the obligations of both the institution and the student, and a copy of the enrollment agreement should be furnished to the student before any payment is made.

2. The institution should determine that each applicant is fully informed as to the nature of the obligation he is entering into and as to his responsibilities and his rights under the enrollment agreement before he signs it.
3. No enrollment agreement should be binding until it has been accepted by the authorities of the institution vested with this responsibility.

Tuition Policies

1. Rates

- a. The total tuition for any specific given course should be the same for all persons at any given time. Group training contracts showing lower individual rates may be negotiated with business, industrial, or governmental agencies.
- b. Tuition charges in courses should be *bona fide*, effective on specific dates, and applicable to all who enroll thereafter or are presently in school, provided the enrollment agreement so stipulates.
- c. All extra charges and costs incidental to training should be revealed to the prospective student before enrollment.
- d. The institution should show that the total tuition charges for each of its courses is reasonable in the light of the service to be rendered, the equipment to be furnished, and its operating costs.

2. Refunds and Cancellations

- a. The institution should have a fair and equitable tuition refund and cancellation policy.
- b. The institution should publish its tuition refund and cancellation policy in its catalog or other appropriate literature.

3. Collection Practices

- a. Methods used by an institution in requesting or demanding payment should follow sound ethical business practices.
- b. If promissory notes or contracts for tuition are sold or discounted to third parties by the institution, enrollees or their financial sponsors should be aware of this action.

Student Recruitment

1. Advertising and Promotional Literature

- a. All advertisements and promotional literature used should be truthful and avoid leaving any false, misleading, or exaggerated impressions with respect to the school, its personnel, its courses and services, or the occupational opportunities for its graduates.
- b. All advertising and promotional literature used should clearly indicate that education, and not employment, is being offered.
- c. All advertising and promotional literature should include the correct name of the school. So-called "blind" advertisements are considered misleading and unethical.

2. Field Agents

- a. An institution is responsible to its current and prospective students for the representations made by its field representatives (including agencies and other authorized persons or firms soliciting students), and therefore should select each of them with the utmost care, provide them with adequate training, and arrange for proper supervision of their work.
- b. It is the responsibility of an institution to conform to the laws and regulations of each of the states in which it operates or solicits students, and in particular to see that each of its field representatives working in any such state is properly licensed or registered as required by the laws of the state.
- c. If field representatives are authorized to prepare and/or run advertising or to use promotional materials, the institution should accept full responsibility for the materials used and should approve any such in advance of their use.
- d. When field representatives are authorized to collect money from an applicant for enrollment, they should leave with the applicant a receipt for the money collected and a copy of the enrollment agreement.
- e. No field representative should use any title, such as "counselor," "advisor," or "registrar," that tends to indicate that his duties and responsibilities are other than they actually are.
- f. No field agent should violate orally any of the standards applicable to advertising and promotional material.

NATIONAL POLICIES

National Policies adopted by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, the American Council on Education, and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges advise postsecondary institutions and accrediting agencies about good practice. ACCJC subscribes to these national policies, as do other accrediting agencies.

POLICY STATEMENT ON THE ROLE AND VALUE OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is an activity long accepted in the United States, but generally unknown in most other countries because other countries rely on governmental supervision and control of educational institutions. The record of accomplishment and outstanding success in the education of Americans can be traced in large part to the reluctance of the United States to impose governmental restrictions on institutions of postsecondary education, and to the success of the voluntary American system of accreditation in promoting quality without inhibiting innovation. The high proportion of Americans benefiting from higher education, the reputation of universities in the United States for both fundamental and applied research, and the widespread availability of professional services in the United States all testify to postsecondary education of high quality, and to the success of the accreditation system which the institutions and professions of the United States have devised to promote that quality.

I

Accreditation is a status granted to an educational institution or a program that has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality. In the United States accreditation is voluntarily sought by institutions and programs, and is conferred by non-governmental bodies.

Accreditation has two fundamental purposes: to assure the quality of the institution or program, and to assist in the improvement of the institution or program. Accreditation, which applies to institutions or programs, is to be distinguished from certification and licensure which apply to individuals.

The bodies conducting institutional accreditation are national or regional in scope, and comprise the institutions that have achieved and maintain accreditation. A specialized body conducting accreditation of a program preparing students for a profession or occupation is often closely associated with professional associations in the field.

Both institutional and specialized bodies conduct the accreditation process using a common pattern. The pattern requires integral self study of the institution or program, followed by an on-site visit by an evaluation team, and a subsequent review and decision by a central governing group. Within this general pattern the various accrediting bodies have developed a variety of individual procedures adapted to their own circumstances. Increasingly, attention has been given to educational outcomes as a basis for evaluation.

Members of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation have been found by COPA to meet specific criteria of procedure and organization regarded as necessary for the effective conduct of the accrediting process. A COPA-recognized accrediting body can be regarded as qualified to conduct evaluations of institutions

and/or programs seeking accreditation, and accreditation by such bodies is generally recognized and accepted in higher education.

Institutional or specialized accreditation cannot guarantee the quality of individual graduates or of individual courses within an institution or program, but can give reasonable assurance of the context and quality of the education offered.

II

An institutional accrediting body considers the characteristics of whole institutions. For this reason an institutional accrediting body gives attention not only to the educational offerings of the institutions it accredits, but also to other such institutional characteristics as the student personnel services, financial conditions, and administrative strength.

The criteria of an institutional accrediting body are broad, as is demanded by the attention to an entire institution and by the presence in the United States of postsecondary institutions of widely different purposes and scopes. Such criteria also provide encouragement to institutions to try innovative curricula and procedures, and to adopt them when they prove successful. The accreditation of an institution by an institutional accrediting body certifies to the general public that the institution:

- a. Has appropriate purposes;
- b. Has the resources needed to accomplish its purposes;
- c. Can demonstrate that it is accomplishing its purposes;
- d. Gives reason to believe that it will continue to accomplish its purposes.

Institutional improvement is encouraged by an institutional accrediting body through the requirement that the accredited institution conducts periodic self-evaluations seeking to identify what the institution does well, determining the areas in which improvement is needed, and developing plans to address needed improvements. While the certification of accreditation indicates an acceptable level of institutional quality, an institution, however excellent, is capable of improvement, which must come from its own clear identification and understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

Institutional improvement is also encouraged by the institutional accrediting body through the advice and counsel provided by the visiting team, which comprises experienced educators drawn primarily from accredited institutions, and by the publications of the accrediting body.

III

A specialized accrediting body focuses its attention on a particular program within an institution of higher education. The close relationship of the specialized

accrediting body with the professional association for the field helps insure that the requirements for accreditation are related to the current requirements for professional practice.

In a number of fields (e.g., medicine, law, dentistry) graduation from an accredited program in the field is a requirement for receiving a license to practice in the field. Thus specialized accreditation is recognized as providing a basic assurance of the scope and quality of professional or occupational preparation. This focus of specialized accreditation leads to accreditation requirements that are generally sharply directed to the nature of the program, including specific requirements for resources needed to provide a program satisfactory for professional preparation. Because of this limitation of focus to a single program, many specialized accrediting bodies require that the institution offering the program be institutionally accredited before consideration can be given to program accreditation.

Specialized accreditation encourages program improvement by application of specific accreditation requirements to measure characteristics of a program and by making judgments about the overall quality of the program. For a non-accredited program, the accreditation requirements serve as specific goals to be achieved. In addition to accrediting standards, assistance for program improvement is provided through the counsel of the accreditation visiting team members, which include practitioners of the profession and experienced and successful faculty members and administrators in other institutions.

IV

Institutional and specialized accreditation are complementary. The focus of an institutional accrediting body on an institution as a total operating unit provides assurance that the general characteristics of the institution have been examined and found to be satisfactory. The focus of a specialized accrediting body on a specific program provides assurance that the details of that particular program meet the external accreditation standards. Institutional accreditation, concerned with evaluating the institution as a whole, does not seek to deal with any particular program in great detail although programs are reviewed as a part of the consideration of the entire institution. Specialized accreditation, speaking to a specific program, does not seek to deal significantly with the general conditions of the institution, although certain general conditions are considered in the context in which the accredited program is offered. Occasionally there are institutions offering but a single program ("free-standing" schools), which may seek institutional and/or specialized accreditation. In such cases, the certification of the accreditation is that appropriate to either institutional or specialized accreditation, and does not imply both certifications, although a specialized body accrediting such an institution is expected to look at the whole institution, just as the institutional body is expected to consider the single educational program.

V

In fulfilling its two purposes, quality assurance and institutional and program improvement, accreditation provides service of value to several constituencies.

To the **Public**, the values of accreditation include:

- a. An assurance of external evaluation of the institution or program, and a finding that there is conformity to general expectations in higher education or the professional field;
- b. An identification of institutions and programs which have voluntarily undertaken explicit activities directed at improving the quality of the institution and its professional programs, and are carrying them out successfully;
- c. An improvement in the professional services available to the public, as accredited programs modify their requirements to reflect changes in knowledge and practice generally accepted in the field;
- d. A decreased need for intervention by public agencies in the operations of educational institutions, since their institutions through accreditation are providing privately for the maintenance and enhancement of educational quality.

To **Students**, accreditation provides:

- a. An assurance that the educational activities of an accredited institution or program have been found to be satisfactory, and therefore meet the needs of students;
- b. Assistance in the transfer of credits between institutions, or in the admission of students to advanced degrees through the general acceptance of credits among accredited institutions when the performance of the student has been satisfactory and the credits to be transferred are appropriate to the receiving institution;
- c. A prerequisite in many cases for entering a profession.

Institutions of higher education benefit from accreditation through:

- a. The stimulus provided for self-evaluation and self-directed institutional and program improvement;
- b. The strengthening of institutional and program self-evaluation by the review and counsel provided through the accrediting body;
- c. The application of criteria of accrediting bodies, generally accepted throughout higher education, which help guard against external encroachments harmful to institutional or program quality by providing benchmarks independent of forces that might impinge on individual institutions;
- d. The enhancing of the reputation of an accredited institution or program because of public regard for accreditation;

- e. The use of accreditation as one means by which an institution can gain eligibility for the participation of itself and its students in certain programs of governmental aid to postsecondary education; accreditation is also usually relied upon by private foundations as a highly desirable indicator of institutional and program quality.

Accreditation serves the **professions** by:

- a. Providing a means for the participation of practitioners in setting the requirements for preparation to enter the professions;
- b. Contributing to the unity of the professions by bringing together practitioners, teachers, and students in an activity directed at improving professional preparation and professional practice.

Adopted by the COPA Board April 15, 1982

POLICY STATEMENT ON RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF
ACCREDITING BODIES AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE
ACCREDITING PROCESS

Preface

American postsecondary education reflects a diverse, semi-autonomous and independent composite of institutions and programs. In the diversity of the system lies its strength. By design, postsecondary education functions with considerable latitude and few restrictions. Compared with most other countries, there has been a remarkable degree of freedom from government regulation and intrusion. Accreditation serves as the balance between institutional autonomy, independence and freedom and the institution's or program's responsibilities to students, the public, the profession and various levels of governments. As a self-regulatory process, voluntary accreditation includes certain rights and responsibilities for both institutions/programs and accrediting bodies. Coupled with institutional or programmatic rights and responsibilities are rights and responsibilities of accreditation that keep such institutions and programs responsive and ensure that they provide quality education. The national, nongovernmental accreditation system is the key in ensuring that education remains fundamentally sound, responsible, responsive and effective, thereby providing public confidence in the integrity and quality of educational institutions and programs.

Preconditions

A statement related to rights and responsibilities of institutions/programs and accrediting bodies is rooted in general assumptions:

1. That the institutions/programs and accrediting bodies are partners in the system of voluntary nongovernmental evaluation.
2. That there is a mutual commitment among institutions/programs and accrediting bodies to:
 - a. Voluntary self-regulation,
 - b. Assessment and enhancement of educational quality,
 - c. Candor,
 - d. Cooperation,
 - e. Integrity, and
 - f. Confidence and trust.

Given these preconditions there are certain reciprocal institutional/programmatic and accrediting body rights and responsibilities that relate directly: (1) to the development and promulgation of accreditation standards and (2) to the various stages of the accrediting process.

A. Development and Promulgation of Standards

Institutions/programs and accrediting bodies, in cooperation with each other, have the responsibility to:

1. Involve broad participation of affected constituencies in the development and acceptance of standards and policies.
2. Develop standards and policies which:
 - a. Are consistent with the purposes of accreditation,
 - b. Are sufficiently flexible to allow diversity and effective program development,
 - c. Allow and encourage institutional/programmatic freedom and autonomy,
 - d. Allow the institution/program to exercise its rights within a reasonable set of parameters relevant to the quality of education and, in professional fields, to prepare individuals effectively for practice in the profession.
3. Conduct periodic reviews of the standards.

B. Five Stages of Accreditation Actions or Process and Concomitant Statements of Rights and Responsibilities

Stage 1: Basic Procedures

- a. The institution/program develops and implements an institutional policy for seeking, securing, and maintaining accredited status with institutional or specialized accrediting bodies.
- b. The institution/program develops an effective mechanism to ensure the internal coordination of accrediting activities.
- c. In corresponding with representatives on campus, the accrediting body routinely provides copies to the chief executive and, where appropriate, the chief academic officer and/or director of the program.
- d. The accrediting body refrains from advertising or soliciting applications for accreditation from institutions/programs.

Stage 2: Information Requested and Supplied (Including the Self Study)

- a. The institution/program determines how it will conduct its self study and the accrediting body specifies the items to be addressed in the report.
- b. The accrediting body requires only information that is relevant to accrediting standards and policies, and, whenever possible, this information will be coordinated with information requested by other accrediting bodies.
- c. The institution/program involves broad and appropriate constituent groups in the preparation and process of self study.
- d. The institution/program discloses to the accrediting body that information which is required to carry out the accrediting body's evaluation and accrediting functions (with due regard to individual privacy).

- e. The accrediting body and institution/program respect the confidentiality of information required and evaluated in the accrediting process.

Stage 3: The Site Visit and Review

- a. When requested by the institution/program, the accrediting body (in consultation with the institution/program and when feasible) conducts joint, concurrent, coordinated, consolidated, or phased visits.
- b. The accrediting body, in consultation with the institution/program, selects site visitors who are:
 - 1. Competent by virtue of experience, training, and orientation,
 - 2. Sensitive to the uniqueness of the institution and/or program, and
 - 3. Impartial, objective, and without conflict of interest.
- c. The accrediting body ensures that the composition, team size, and length of the visit are:
 - 1. Determined in consultation with the institution/program,
 - 2. Determined with regard to the size and complexity of the institution/program, and are
 - 3. Most appropriate to accomplish the objectives of the visit.
- d. The institution/program provides maximum opportunity for communication with all relevant constituencies.
- e. The accrediting body communicates its findings derived from the site visit to the institution/program.
- f. The accrediting body ensures that the report identifies and distinguishes clearly between statements directly related to quality-assessment and those representing suggestions for quality-improvement.
- g. The accrediting body provides the chief executive officer of the institution (and the chief academic officer and/or the director of the program) with an opportunity to comment on the written report of the visiting team and to file supplemental materials pertinent to the facts and conclusions therein before the accrediting body takes action on the report.

Stage 4: The Decision, Including:

- commission action
 - conveyance of action
 - appeal
 - public announcement of action
- a. The accrediting body permits the withdrawal of a request for any status of accreditation at any time prior to the decision on that request.
 - b. The accrediting body makes decisions solely on the basis of published standards, policies, and procedures using information available and made known to the institution/program.
 - c. The accrediting body avoids conflicts of interest in the decision making process.

- d. The accrediting body ensures the confidentiality of those deliberations in which accrediting decisions are made, but due process will be observed in all deliberations.
- e. The accrediting body notifies institutions and programs promptly in writing of accrediting decisions, giving reasons for the actions.
- f. The accrediting body ensures that the communication of the final accrediting decision, *i.e.*, the notification letter and/or final report, identifies and clearly distinguishes between statements directly related to quality-assessment and those representing suggestions for quality-improvement.
- g. The institution/program has a right to appeal an accrediting decision in accordance with the policies of the accrediting body and to maintain its accredited status during the appeal.
- h. The accrediting body publishes accrediting decisions, both affirmative and negative, except for initial denial which need not be made public.
- i. The accrediting body maintains the confidentiality of the final report, but it may request that corrective action be taken if an institution/program releases information misrepresenting or distorting any accreditation action taken by the body or the status of affiliation with the accrediting body. If the institution/program is not prompt in taking corrective action, the accrediting body may further release a public statement providing the correct information.

Stage 5: Follow-Up (Including interim reports and reapplication)

- a. The accrediting body can request periodic reports, special reports, and consultative activities relevant to the institution's/program's accreditation status.
- b. The accrediting body provides written notice to the institution/program of the action taken in relation to a special report or visit.
- c. Accrediting bodies may request the reevaluation of an institution/program at any time for cause.
- d. The institution/program has an obligation to inform the accrediting body of any substantive changes.
- e. The institution/program has a right to have pertinent information provided concerning reapplication requirements for accreditation under the terms and conditions specified by the accrediting body.
- f. Separate from the accrediting process leading to a decision on accredited status, the accrediting body assists and stimulates improvement of the educational effectiveness of an institution/program, and to this end makes provision for appropriate assistance.

*Adopted by the COPA Board
April 19, 1985*

**POLICY STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN
INSTITUTIONAL ADVERTISING, STUDENT RECRUITMENT, AND
REPRESENTATION OF ACCREDITED STATUS**

All accredited postsecondary institutions, or individuals acting on their behalf, must exhibit integrity and responsibility in advertising, student recruitment, and representation of accredited status. Responsible self-regulation requires rigorous attention to principles of good practice.

I. Advertising, Publications, Promotional Literature

1. Educational programs and services offered should be the primary emphasis of all advertisements, publications, promotional literature, and recruitment activities.
2. All statements and representations should be clear, factually accurate, and current. Supporting information should be kept on file and readily available for review.
3. Catalogs and other official publications should be readily available and accurately depict;
 - a. institutional purposes and objectives;
 - b. entrance requirements and procedures;
 - c. basic information on programs and courses, with required sequences and frequency of course offerings explicitly stated;
 - d. degree and program completion requirements, including length of time required to obtain a degree or certification of completion;
 - e. faculty (full-time and part-time listed separately) with degrees held and the conferring institution;
 - f. institutional facilities readily available for educational use;
 - g. rules and regulations for conduct;
 - h. tuition, fees, and other program costs;
 - i. opportunities and requirements for financial aid;
 - j. policies and procedures for refunding fees and charges to students who withdraw from enrollment.¹
4. In college catalogs and/or official publications describing career opportunities, clear and accurate information should be provided on:
 - a. national and/or state legal requirements for eligibility for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered;
 - b. any unique requirements for career paths, or for employment and advancement opportunities in the profession or occupation described.

1. See ACE Guidelines #1: "Policy Guidelines for Refund of Student Charges"

II. Student Recruitment for Admissions²

1. Student recruitment should be conducted by well-qualified admissions officers and trained volunteers whose credentials, purposes, and position or affiliation with the institution are clearly specified.
2. Independent contractors or agents used by the institution for recruiting purposes shall be governed by the same principles as institutional admissions officers and volunteers.
3. The following practices in student recruitment are to be scrupulously avoided:
 - a. assuring employment unless employment arrangements have been made and can be verified;
 - b. misrepresenting job placement and employment opportunities for graduates;
 - c. misrepresenting program costs;
 - d. misrepresenting abilities required to complete intended program;
 - e. offering to agencies or individual persons money or inducements other than educational services of the institution in exchange for student enrollment. (Except for awards of privately endowed restricted funds, grants or scholarships are to be offered only on the basis of specific criteria related to merit or financial need.)

III. Representation of Accredited Status

1. The term "accreditation" is to be used only when accredited status is conferred by an accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and/or the U.S. Secretary of Education.
2. No statement should be made about possible future accreditation status or qualification not yet conferred by the accrediting body. Statements like the following are not permissible; "(Name of institution) has applied for candidacy with the Commission on Colleges of the _____ Association"; "The _____ program is being evaluated by the National Association of _____, and it is anticipated that accreditation will be granted in the near future."
3. Any reference to state approval should be limited to a brief statement concerning the actual charter, incorporation, license, or registration given.
4. The phrase "fully accredited" should be avoided, since no partial accreditation is possible.
5. When accredited status is affirmed in institutional catalogs and other official publications, it should be stated accurately and fully in a comprehensive statement, including:
 - a. identifying the accrediting body by name;

2. See ACE Guidelines #2: "Joint Statement of Principles of Good Practice in College Admissions and Recruitment"

b. indicating the scope of accreditation as:

(1) institutional (regional or national);

Example:

The University of Southern Yukon is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Northwest Association, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (and/or the U.S. Department of Education).

(2) programmatic (curriculum or unit accredited must be specified);

Examples:

Programs in (Civil Engineering and Aeronautical Engineering) are accredited by the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology, a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (and/or the U.S. Department of Education).

The Department of Music at the University of Hiawatha is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music, a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (and/or the U.S. Department of Education).

Programs for the preparation of elementary, secondary, and special education teachers at the bachelor's and master's level, for the preparation of guidance counselors at the master's and specialist degree level, and for school superintendents at the specialist and doctoral degree level are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (and/or the U.S. Department of Education).

6. The accredited status of a program should not be misrepresented.

a. The accreditation granted by an institutional accrediting body has reference to the quality of the institution as a whole. Since institutional accreditation does not imply specific accreditation of any particular program in the institution, statements like "this program is accredited," or "this degree is accredited," are incorrect and misleading.

b. "Free-standing" institutions offering programs in a single field, e.g., a school of art, engineering, theology, granted accreditation by a regional or national institutional accrediting body alone, should clearly state that this accreditation does not imply specialized accreditation of the program offered.

Member agencies of COPA should assume responsibility for informing the COPA office of improper or misleading advertising or unethical practices which come to their attention, so that COPA may inform the appropriate accrediting association or associations.

*Adopted by the COPA Board
April 20, 1983*

POLICY STATEMENT ON ACCREDITATION AND AUTHORIZATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING THROUGH TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Introduction

This Statement summarizes the results of a two year study on assessing long distance learning by telecommunications. The study, co-sponsored by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, focused on the rapid development and use of telecommunications to offer postsecondary education and the need to ensure the quality and integrity of this instructional activity. It was supported by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, whose views it does not necessarily reflect.

A series of task forces and advisory committees were responsible for developing the components in the Statement. During their deliberations, each group affirmed the need to address the quality of telecommunications instruction within the existing assessment framework, which includes state authorization, non-government voluntary accreditation, and institutional self-regulation. This belief is reinforced in the principles and procedures which follow. The following definition was used during the study.

Telecommunications instruction is any course or series of courses offered or sponsored by a postsecondary education institution, consortium of institutions, or other organization, for which credit is offered or awarded toward a certificate, diploma, or degree. The course or courses must have, as the primary mode of delivery, television, video cassette or disc, film, radio, computer, or other supportive devices which build upon the audio-video format. In many instances, the telecommunications course is supported by textbooks, study guides, library resources, and other study aids, and may also involve personal interaction with faculty, tutors, or other educational personnel by telephone, mail, or in face-to-face meetings.

I. General Principles

- A. The assessment of programs delivered by telecommunications should take place within the context of an institution's or other organization's total education mission.
- B. The policies and procedures for assessing long distance learning should not discourage the development and use of technology for educational purposes. Specific requirements by state authorizing agencies and accrediting bodies should accommodate constructive innovation.
- C. The focus of states' authorization and of non-governmental accreditation activity in long distance learning by telecommunications should be on postsecondary institutions and other organizations which award credit that can be applied toward academic degrees, or which provide other credentials that have credit bearing significance such as programs leading to certification

of proficiency or licensure. Authorization and accreditation requirements should not apply to those institutions and organizations which are involved only in the production of courses or support materials.

- D. State authorization activities are and should be the initial step and a necessary prerequisite to accreditation in the assessment of long distance learning by telecommunications.
- E. The states have a responsibility in consumer protection which should be reinforced as necessary. States without adequate authorization legislation are urged to develop such legislation.
- F. Institutions and other organizations involved in telecommunications instruction, as in other instructional activities, should use and further develop rigorous outcome measures to assess program effectiveness. Accrediting bodies and state authorizing agencies should validate and use such measures to the greatest possible extent in their evaluation activities.
- G. The focus of the assessment activity for long distance learning by telecommunications conducted by educational institutions should be accreditation, either institutional or professional as appropriate to the offerings.
- H. The interests of higher education and the general public are best served when institutions voluntarily seek appropriate approval even in situations in which they may not be required to do so. Toward this end, the accreditation and authorization of telecommunications-based educational programs should be thorough and reasonable. If this can be accomplished, then the institutional burden of seeking approval will be a reasonable price to pay for increased public confidence.
- I. The necessity of an institution's seeking state authorization depends in large measure upon the institution's "physical presence" in the state or states in which it wishes to operate. Although there is yet no clear legal definition of "physical presence" the following guidelines have been developed:
 - 1. The act of transmitting an electronic signal into another state without any other contact within that state does not, under current laws, constitute physical presence. Similarly, the use of an interstate interactive computer system to deliver educational services, absent any other in-state contact, would not necessarily create jurisdiction over the out-of-state institution.
 - 2. The use of interstate mail and telephone services to provide instructional and related services to students involves protected interstate commerce and, therefore, generally cannot be subjected to state regulation.
 - 3. The presence of an institutional recruiter (agent) in a state may constitute sufficient physical presence of an institution in that state to subject it to licensure. It may also subject the institution to other legal constraints.
 - 4. Support services that include institutional representatives in a state, such as tutors, counselors, or instructors, in most instances establish physical presence sufficient to afford the state jurisdiction through its approval mechanism.

II. Procedures

- A. A primary and fundamental objective is the development of close working relations among state authorizing agencies, accrediting bodies, and institutions. They should undertake to reexamine and develop regulations, standards, and criteria for use in the evaluation of instruction delivered by telecommunications. State agencies and accrediting bodies should work together to ensure that state authorization provisions and procedures and accrediting standards complement each other. By undertaking this joint effort, a second objective of reducing the multiple and repetitive procedures currently required for institutions operating in several jurisdictions may be realized. The following procedures are suggested as an initial step toward meeting those objectives:

1. With respect to the states:
 - a. States should provide mechanisms to exchange information with each other and with accrediting bodies concerning standards, procedures, and actions relating to the authorization of institutions to operate and grant degrees.
 - b. State authorizing agencies should seek more uniform authorization requirements so that educational institutions eventually can receive authorization in all jurisdictions through common assessment procedures.
 - c. The states have constitutional and statutory responsibility to provide and supervise education. In those states where statutes providing supervision of postsecondary institutions currently do not exist, appropriate legislation should be sought, and the means for reviewing and authorizing educational operations and institutions should be established. Due consideration should be given to instruction delivered by telecommunications.
 - d. The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association should continue to work closely with the states to attain these objectives.
2. With respect to regional, national, and specialized accrediting bodies:
 - a. Accrediting bodies should continue to develop standards and procedures for off-campus programs, including instruction delivered by telecommunications, in harmony with the COPA policy statement on off-campus operations and institutional and accrediting bodies' agreements of understanding.
 - b. Accrediting bodies, through COPA, should create better mechanisms for the exchange of information with each other and with all affected state agencies concerning standards, procedures, and actions relating to the accreditation of institutions and programs and their off-campus activities, including instruction delivered by telecommunications.
 - c. Accrediting bodies, as they do now for all other programs, should require institutions involved in long distance learning by telecommunications to have the appropriate authorization to operate in any state in which they wish to offer instruction.

- d. Accrediting bodies should require demonstration by an institution or, in the case of specialized accreditation, by the program under evaluation that its students achieve the educational objectives set for them. Currently accepted criteria of accreditation can be applied to institutions and programs offering long distance learning or using telecommunications and other electronic techniques. These criteria require, in accordance with accreditation standards, that institutions or programs:
 - 1) Have clearly defined and appropriate educational objectives.
 - 2) Have the resources and structure needed to accomplish these objectives.
 - 3) Demonstrate that these objectives are being accomplished.
 - 4) Give reasons to believe that these objectives will continue to be accomplished.
- e. The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation should continue to work closely with accrediting bodies to attain these objectives.

III. Implementation

The following specific procedures are suggested to effect these recommendations:

- A. An institution should give to the appropriate state agencies and accrediting bodies advance notice of intent to initiate programs using telecommunications that provide credit applicable toward degrees.
- B. To obtain appropriate recognition from state agencies and accrediting bodies, the following strategy is suggested:
 - 1. An institution would provide documentation on the objectives and scope of its programs using telecommunications, including provision for instruction and instructional support. This information would be provided on the Institutional Profile for Telecommunications Instruction, a document designed to provide state agencies and accrediting bodies with crucial information about telecommunications-based activities.
 - 2. State agencies and accrediting bodies would review the documentation to determine whether the instruction and instructional support meet the established requirements and standards.
 - 3. The documentation would be audited, as appropriate, by state agencies and accrediting bodies and certified as being complete, accurate, and representative of the institution's telecommunications activities. The certified documentation could then be made available to any state agency or accrediting body needing such information.
 - 4. If proper quality and quality controls are evident, approval would be granted by state agencies and accrediting bodies to include the activity within the institution's recognized status.
 - 5. If necessary to reach a sound decision, a state agency or accrediting body may request additional documentation or schedule an on-site visit. The institution, for its part, may withdraw its request without prejudice or appeal any adverse decision to the appropriate body or bodies consistent with due process procedures.

- C. Interregional or other agreements envisioning a single accrediting activity for an institution, conducted cooperatively by two or more accrediting bodies, should be fully implemented as they relate to long distance learning so that the accreditation of an institution can be conducted in a single process.

Conclusion

The principles and procedures recommended in this Statement were formulated to ensure the highest quality and integrity of instruction delivered by telecommunications. If adopted by state authorizing agencies and accrediting bodies, there will be a better likelihood of increased cooperation between them, and an important step will have been taken toward instituting common, reasonable, and thorough approval practices.

*Adopted by the COPA Board
October 11, 1984*

and by the

*State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
August 1, 1984*

POLICY STATEMENT ON CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CLOSING A POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

I. Preparing the Way

A decision to close an educational institution requires thoughtful planning and careful consultation with all affected constituencies. Every effort should be devoted to informing each constituency as fully as possible about the conditions requiring consideration of a decision of such importance, and all available information should be shared. Before closing, such alternatives as merging with another institution, forming a consortium, or participating in extensive inter-institutional sharing and cooperation should be carefully considered. As much as possible, the determination to close an institution should involve a consultative process but responsibility for the final decision to close rests with the board of governors.

Tradition and sentiment are important considerations, but sentimentality should not be allowed to determine events. A decision to close should never be made or reversed simply on the basis of fears, hopes, or aspirations that have little relation to reality. Neither should it be delayed to the point where the institution has lost its viability and its educational program no longer retains quality and integrity. Since the immediate interests of current students and faculty are most directly affected, their present and future prospects require especially sensitive attention and involvement.

It is assumed that closing an institution means a decision permanently to discontinue its educational activities, not merely to suspend them for an indefinite period in the hope that circumstances may someday permit their resumption. But it should be noted that most institutions of higher education are corporations established under the provisions of state law, and as such may have legal responsibilities (holding title to real property, for example) that may necessitate the continued existence of the corporation after the educational activities of the institution have been terminated. Indeed, it is probable that such continued corporate existence, at least for a time, will prove to be the usual situation. It is unlikely that in most cases corporate existence and educational activities can be terminated simultaneously.

II. Closing an Institution

A decision to close requires specific plans for providing in appropriate ways for the students, the faculty, the administrative and support staff, and for the disposition of the institution's assets. Many considerations bear upon closing an educational institution, and each situation will be unique. Public institutions, seminaries, church related colleges--the nature and sponsorship of each institution require different emphasis and pose particular conditions to be met in reaching and carrying out the ultimate decision. Nevertheless, general guidelines may be helpful to each institution considering closing.

This statement makes only incidental reference to such corporate responsibilities and always in the educational context. It is imperative, therefore, that a Board of Trustees considering closing an institution under its care should be guided not only by guidelines such as these and by the state educational authorities, but also by advice of legal counsel. Special counsel to advise with respect to problems of closing may be desirable for the institution. Institutional and specialized accrediting bodies should also be consulted and be kept fully apprised of developments.

A. The Students

Students who have not completed their degrees should be provided for according to their academic needs. Arrangements for transfer to other institutions will require complete academic records and all other related information gathered in dossiers which can be transmitted promptly to receiving institutions. Agreements made with other institutions to receive transferring students and to accept their records should be in writing. Where financial aid is concerned, particularly federal or state grants, arrangements should be made with the appropriate agencies to transfer the grants to the receiving institutions. Where such arrangements cannot be completed, students should be fully informed. In cases where students have held institutional scholarships or grants and there are available funds which can legally be used to support students while completing degrees at other institutions, appropriate agreements should be negotiated.

B. Academic Records and Financial Aid Transcripts

All academic, financial aid information, and other records should be prepared for permanent filing, including microfilming. Arrangements should be made with the state department of higher education or other appropriate agency for filing of student records. If there is no state educational agency which can receive records, arrangements should be made with another college or university or with the state archives to preserve the records. Notification should be sent to every current and past student indicating where the records are being stored and what the accessibility to those records will be. Where possible, a copy of a student's record should also be forwarded to the individual student.

C. Completion of Institutional Obligations

When a student chooses to continue at another institution but is within a year to 18 months of completing an academic degree in the closing institution, arrangements may be made to permit that student to complete the requirements for a degree elsewhere but to receive it from the closed institution. This may require special action by the appropriate state agency. Such arrangements should also include provision for continuation of the institution's accreditation only for this purpose by the accrediting agency involved. These steps normally require the institution to continue as a legal corporate entity for 12 to 18 months beyond the

closing date, but any such arrangement must be established in careful consultation with the appropriate authorities and with their written consent.

D. Provision for Faculty and Staff

In every possible case, the institution should arrange for continuation of those faculty and staff who will be necessary for the completion of the institution's work up to the closing date. When faculty and staff are no longer needed, the institution should make every effort to assist them in finding alternative employment. It should be understood that the institution can make no guarantees, but genuinely good faith efforts to assist in relocation and reassignment are essential. In the event that faculty or staff members find new positions, early resignations should be accepted.

III. The Final determination

Determinations must be made to allocate whatever financial resources and assets remain after the basic needs of current students, faculty, and staff are provided for. When the financial resources of the institution are inadequate to honor commitments, the Board should investigate what alternatives and protection are available under applicable bankruptcy laws before deciding to close. If funds are insufficient to maintain normal operations through the end of the closing process, the institution should not overlook the possibility of soliciting onetime gifts and donations to assist in fulfilling its final obligations.

Every effort should be made to develop publicly defensible policies for dividing the resources equitably among those with claims against the institution. One of the best ways of achieving this goal is to involve potential claimants in the process of developing the policies. Time and effort devoted to carrying the process to a judicious conclusion may considerably reduce the likelihood of lawsuits or other forms of confrontation.

It is impossible to anticipate in advance the many claims that might be made against remaining resources of an institution, but the following three principles may help to sort out possible claims and to set priorities:

- (a) Students have the right to expect basic minimal services during the final semester, not only in the academic division, but also in the business office, financial aid office, registrar's office, counseling, and other essential support services. Staff should be retained long enough to provide these services. It may be appropriate to offer special incentives to keep key personnel present.
- (b) Reasonable notice is given to all employees, explaining the possibility of early termination of contracts and that the reasons for retaining some personnel longer than others are based on satisfying the minimal needs of students and the legal requirements for closing.

- (c) Every effort should be made to honor long-term financial obligations (loans, debentures, etc.) even though the parties holding such claims may choose not to press them.

IV. The Closing Date

The Board of Trustees should take a formal vote to terminate the institution on a specified date. That date will depend on a number of factors including the decision to file or not to file for bankruptcy. Another key factor is whether or not all obligations to students will have been satisfactorily discharged. This is particularly important if the decision is made to allow seniors in their final year to graduate from the institution by completing their degree requirements elsewhere. If such arrangements are made, the Board must be sure to take the legal action necessary to permit awarding degrees after the institution otherwise ceases to function. Normally, formal vote to award a degree is made after all requirements have been met, but it is legally possible to make arrangements for a student to complete the requirements for a degree at another institution and to receive the degree from the closed institution. These requirements must be clearly specified along with a deadline for completion. Also the Board must identify the person or persons authorized to determine whether or not these requirements have in fact been satisfied. Arrangements must be completed with the appropriate state and accrediting agencies in advance in order to assure that the degree is awarded by a legally authorized and accredited institution.

V. Disposition of Assets

In the case of a not-for-profit institution, the legal requirements of the state and the federal government must be carefully examined with respect to the disposition of institutional assets. Arrangements for the sale of the physical plant, equipment, the library, special collections, art, or other funds must be explored with legal counsel. In the case of wills, endowments, or special grants, the institution should discuss with the donors, grantors, executors of estates, and other providers of special funds arrangements to accommodate their wishes. State laws regarding the disposition of funds from a nonprofit institution must be meticulously followed.

All concerned federal and state agencies need to be apprised of the institution's situation and any obligations relating to estate or federal funds need to be cleared with the proper agencies.

VI. Other Considerations

The institution should establish a clear understanding with its creditors and all other agencies involved with its activities to assure that their claims and interests will be properly processed. Insofar as possible, the institution should assure that its final arrangements will not be subject to later legal proceedings which might jeopardize the records or status of its students or faculty.

VII. Conclusion

The closing of an educational institution is never a happy event. Nevertheless, such action can be rendered less traumatic by careful attention to the details of the legal and moral obligations of the institution. Closing will be marked by sadness, but well-planned and conscientious efforts to assure that the institution's students, faculty, and staff will be optimally provided for and that its assets will be used in ways that will honor the intentions of the original donors should help in avoiding bitterness and rancor. A final report on the closing should be submitted to the appropriate accrediting and state agencies for their records.

Note: The most recent and comprehensive reference work, which includes summaries of state regulations regarding disposition of student records and dissolution of non-profit colleges and universities is the following:

O'Neill, Joseph P. and Barnett, Samuel. College and Corporate Change: Merger, Bankruptcy, and Closure. Princeton, N.J., Conference University Press, 1980.

*Adopted by the COPA Board
April 15, 1982*

JOINT POLICY STATEMENT ON TRANSFER AND AWARD OF ACADEMIC CREDIT

**Council on Postsecondary Accreditation • American Council on Education/
Commission on Educational Credit • American Association of Collegiate
Registrars and Admissions Officers**

This statement is directed to institutions of postsecondary education and others concerned with the transfer of academic credit among institutions and award of academic credit for extra-institutional learning. Basic to this statement is the principle that each institution is responsible for determining its own policies and practices with regard to the transfer and award of credit. Institutions are encouraged to review their policies and practices periodically to assure that they accomplish the institution's objectives and that they function in a manner that is fair and equitable to students. Any statements, this one or others referred to, should be used as guides, not as substitutes, for institutional policies and practices.

Transfer of credit is a concept that now involves transfer between dissimilar institutions and curricula and recognition of extra-institutional learning, as well as transfer between institutions and curricula of similar characteristics. As their personal circumstances and educational objectives change, students seek to have their learning, wherever and however attained, recognized by institutions where they enroll for further study. It is important for reasons of social equity and educational effectiveness, as well as the wise use of resources, for all institutions to develop reasonable and definitive policies and procedures for acceptance of transfer credit. Such policies and procedures should provide maximum consideration for the individual student who has changed institutions or objectives. It is the receiving institution's responsibility to provide reasonable and definitive policies and procedures for determining a student's knowledge in required subject areas. All institutions have a responsibility to furnish transcripts and other documents necessary for a receiving institution to judge the quality and quantity of the work. Institutions also have a responsibility to advise the students that the work reflected on the transcript may or may not be accepted by a receiving institution.

Inter-institutional Transfer of Credit

Transfer of credit from one institution to another involves at least the following three considerations:

1. The educational quality of the institution from which the student transfers;
2. The comparability of the nature, content, and level of credit earned to that offered by the receiving institution; and
3. The appropriateness and applicability of the credit earned to the programs offered by the receiving institution, in light of the student's educational goals.

Accredited Institutions

Accreditation speaks primarily to the first of these considerations, serving as the basic indicator that an institution meets certain minimum standards. Users of accreditation are urged to give careful attention to the accreditation conferred by accrediting bodies recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). COPA has a formal process of recognition which requires that any accrediting body so recognized must meet the same standards. Under these standards, COPA has recognized a number of accrediting bodies, including:

1. Regional accrediting commissions (which historically accredited the more traditional colleges and universities but which now accredit proprietary, vocational-technical, and single-purpose institutions as well);
2. National accrediting bodies that accredit various kinds of specialized institutions; and
3. Certain professional organizations that accredit free-standing professional schools, in addition to programs within multi-purpose institutions. (COPA annually publishes a list of recognized accrediting bodies, as well as a directory of institutions accredited by these organizations.)

Although accrediting agencies vary in the ways they are organized and in their statements of scope and mission, all accrediting bodies that meet COPA's standards for recognition function to assure that the institutions or programs they accredit have met generally accepted minimum standards for accreditation.

Comparability and Applicability

Comparability of the nature, content, and level of transfer credit and the appropriateness and applicability of the credit earned to programs offered by the receiving institution are as important in the evaluation process as the accreditation status of the institution at which the transfer credit was awarded. Since accreditation does not address these questions, this information must be obtained from catalogues and other materials and from direct contact between knowledgeable and experienced faculty and staff at both the receiving and sending institutions. When such considerations as comparability and appropriateness of credit are satisfied, however, the receiving institution should have reasonable confidence that students from accredited institutions are qualified to undertake the receiving institution's educational program.

Accreditation affords reason for confidence in an institution's or a program's purposes, in the appropriateness of its resources and plans for carrying out these purposes, and in its effectiveness in accomplishing its goals, insofar as these things can be judged. Accreditation speaks to the probability, but does not guarantee, that students have met acceptable standards of educational accomplishment.

Admissions and Degree Purposes

At some institutions there may be differences between the acceptance of credit for admission purposes and the applicability of credit for degree purposes. A receiving institution may accept previous work, place credit value on it, and enter it on the transcript. However, that previous work, because of its nature and not its inherent quality, may be determined to have no applicability to a specific degree to be pursued by the student.

Institutions have a responsibility to make this distinction, and its implications, clear to students before they decide to enroll. This should be a matter of full disclosure, with the best interests of the student in mind. Institutions also should make every reasonable effort to reduce the gap between credits accepted and credits applied toward an educational credential.

Unaccredited Institutions

Institutions of postsecondary education that are not accredited by COPA-recognized accredited bodies may lack that status for reasons unrelated to questions of quality. Such institutions, however, cannot provide a reliable, third-party assurance that they meet or exceed minimum standards. That being the case, students transferring from such institutions may encounter special problems in gaining acceptance and transferring credits to accredited institutions. Institutions admitting students from unaccredited institutions should take special steps to validate credits previously earned.

Foreign Institutions

In most cases, foreign institutions are chartered and authorized by their national governments, usually through a ministry of education. Although this provides for a standardization within a country, it does not produce useful information about comparability from one country to another. No other nation has a system comparable to voluntary accreditation. The Division of Higher Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is engaged in a project to develop international compacts for the acceptance of educational credentials. At the operational level, four organizations--the Council on International Exchange (CIEE), the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Student Credentials (CEC), the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA), and the National Liaison Committee on Foreign Student Admissions (NLC)--often can assist institutions by distributing general guidelines on admission and placement of foreign students. Equivalency or placement recommendations are to be evaluated in terms of the programs and policies of the individual receiving institutions.

Validation of Extra-institutional and Experiential Learning for Transfer Purposes

Transfer-of-credit policies should encompass educational accomplishment attained in extra-institutional settings as well as at accredited postsecondary institutions.

In deciding on the award of credit for extra-institutional learning, institutions will find the services of the American Council on Education's Office of Educational Credit helpful. One of the Office's functions is to operate and foster programs to determine credit equivalencies for various modes of extra-institutional learning. The Office maintains evaluation programs for formally structured courses offered by the military, and civilian non-collegiate sponsors such as business, corporations, government agencies, and labor unions. Evaluation services are also available for examination programs, for occupations with validated job proficiency evaluation systems, and for correspondence courses offered by schools accredited by the National Home Study Council. The results are published in a Guide series. Another resource is the General Education Development (GED) Testing Program, which provides a means for assessing high school equivalency.

For learning that has not been validated through the ACE formal credit recommendation process or through credit-by examination programs, institutions are urged to explore the Council for Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL) procedures and processes. Pertinent CAEL publications designed for this purpose are also listed.

Uses of this Statement

This statement has been endorsed by the three national associations most concerned with practices in the area of transfer and award of credit--the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the American Council on Education/Commission on Educational Credit, and the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

Institutions are encouraged to use this statement as a basis for discussions in developing or reviewing institutional policies with regard to transfer. If the statement reflects an institution's policies, that institution might want to use this publication to inform faculty, staff, and students.

It is recommended that accrediting bodies reflect the essential precepts of this statement in their criteria.

*Adopted by the COPA Board
October 10, 1978*

*Approved by the American Council on Education/Commission on Educational Credit
December 5, 1978*

*Approved by the Executive Committee, American Association of Collegiate Registrars
and Admissions Officers
November 21, 1978*

SELF-REGULATION INITIATIVES:

GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

POLICY GUIDELINES FOR REFUND OF STUDENT CHARGES

BACKGROUND

National attention has for some time focused on the matter of fair and equitable refund of student charges and fees. Since 1976, federal law has required that all institutions receiving federal student-aid funds have equitable refund policies. Within the higher education community the belief has grown that policy guidelines for voluntary self-regulation, developed by higher education representatives, are preferable to governmental definitions and regulations. To this end, the American Council on Education and other associations urged the National Association of College and University Business Officers to prepare policy guidelines for refunding student fees.

The guidelines were drafted by NACUBO's Student-Related Programs Committee and were reviewed by persons representing a wide range of institutions and professional responsibilities. Associations that have approved the guidelines are listed below. The guidelines have gained acceptance by officials in the U.S. Office of Education. Leo Kornfeld, Deputy Commissioner for Student Financial Assistance, lauded the effort as important progress toward self-regulation and indicated that, as a result, the USOE will not proceed with developing regulations for tuition refund policies of colleges and universities.

The guidelines summarize elements of fair and equitable policy in refunding tuition, room, board, and other charges for students who withdraw from their studies or otherwise discontinue their use of an institution's services before the end of an academic term. They offer a balanced approach to issues related to refunds, including the financial commitments incurred by the institution and the responsibility to treat both withdrawing and continuing students fairly. Overall, they allow institutions to ensure that their students' rights to fair and equitable treatment are fully recognized.

Colleges and universities are urged to use the guidelines to evaluate and, where necessary, modify current institutional policies and practices to meet the spirit and intent of the guidelines.

GUIDELINE ONE. The governing board of the institution should review and approve the schedule of all institutional charges and refund policies applicable to students. The pricing of services and refund policies have important consequences to students, parents, the institution, and society; as such, pricing and refund policies should receive board attention and approval.

GUIDELINE TWO. Institutions should seek consumer views in the process of establishing and amending charge and refund structures. Decisions regarding institutional funds are ultimately the sole responsibility of the institution's legally designated fund custodians. However, consumer concerns do affect decision making, and involving consumers in decision making related to charges and refunds is a desirable approach for assessing student needs and creating public awareness of institutional requirements.

GUIDELINE THREE. Institutions should publish a current schedule of all student charges, a statement of the purpose for such charges, and related refund policies, and have them readily available free of charge to current and prospective students. Students and parents have a right to know what charges they will be expected to pay and what will or will not be refunded. They also have a right to know what services accompany payment of the charges. Informational materials published free for students and prospective students are ideal for this purpose.

GUIDELINE FOUR. Institutions should clearly designate all optional charges as "optional" in all published schedules and related materials. Clearly, charges that are mandatory and charges that are optional must be plainly differentiated in all printed materials. Also, the institution should state clearly in its schedule if a charge is optional for some students but required for others. Statements accompanying the schedule may include institutional endorsements of the optional program or service.

GUIDELINE FIVE. Institutions should clearly identify charges and deposits that are nonrefundable as "nonrefundable" on all published schedules. Institutions determine on an individual basis which of their charges are refundable or nonrefundable. In general, admissions fees, application fees, laboratory fees, facility and student activity fees, and other similar charges are not refundable. Such fees are generally charged to cover the costs of activities such as processing applications and other student information, reserving academic positions, and establishing the limits of institutional programs and services, reserving housing space, and otherwise setting the fixed costs of the institution for the coming academic period.

Institutions determine on an individual basis which of their deposits are refundable or nonrefundable. Some deposits will be nonrefundable or will be credited to a student's account (e.g., tuition deposits). Others are refundable according to the terms of the deposit agreement (e.g., deposits for breakage).

GUIDELINE SIX. Institutions should refund housing rental charges, less a deposit, so long as written notification of cancellation is made prior to a well-publicized date that provides reasonable opportunity to make the space available to other students. Written notification on or before the beginning of the term of the contract is necessary to ensure utilization of housing units. During the term of the contract, room charges are generally not refundable. However, based on the program offered, space availability, debt service requirements, state and local

laws, and other individual circumstances, institutions may provide for some more flexible refund guideline for housing.

GUIDELINE SEVEN. Institutions should refund board charges in full, less a deposit, if written notification of cancellation is made prior to a well-publicized date that falls on or before the beginning of the term of the contract. Subsequent board charges should be refunded on a pro rata basis less a withdrawal fee. It is reasonable to make a refund for those goods and services not consumed. The withdrawal charge should reflect that portion of an institution's costs that are fixed for the term of the contract.

GUIDELINE EIGHT. The institutional tuition refund policy for an academic period should include the following minimum guidelines:

1. The institution should refund 100 percent of the tuition charge, less a deposit fee, if written notification of cancellation is made prior to a well-publicized date that falls on or before the first day of classes.
2. The institution should refund at least 25 percent of the tuition charge if written notification of withdrawal is made during the first 25 percent of the academic period.

It is reasonable to refund tuition charges on a sliding scale if a student withdraws from his or her program prior to the end of the first 25 percent of the academic period unless state law imposes a more restrictive refund policy.

GUIDELINE NINE. The institution should assess no penalty charges where the institution, as opposed to the student, is in error. The institution should make refunds in cases where the institution has assessed charges in error. Penalty charges, such as those involving late registration fees, change of scheduled fees, late payment fees, should not be assessed if it is determined that the student is not responsible for the action causing the charge to be levied.

GUIDELINE TEN. Institutions should advise students that any notifications of withdrawal or cancellation and requests for refund must be in writing and addressed to the designated institutional officer. A student's written notification of withdrawal or cancellation and request for a refund provides an accurate record of transactions and also ensures that such requests will be processed on a timely basis. Acceptance of oral requests is an undesirable practice.

GUIDELINE ELEVEN. Institutions should pay or credit refunds due on a timely basis. The definition of "timely basis" should include the time required to process a formal student request for refund, to process a check if required, and to allow for mail delivery, when necessary. If an institution has a policy that a refund of an inconsequential amount will not be made, such policy should be published as part of all materials related to refund policies.

GUIDELINE TWELVE. Institutions should publicize, as a part of their dissemination of information on charges and refunds, that an appeals process exists for students or parents who feel that individual circumstances warrant exceptions from published policy. The informational materials should include the name, title, and address of the official responsible. Although charges and refund policies should reflect extensive consideration of student and institutional needs, it will not be possible to encompass in these structures the variety of personal circumstances that may exist or develop. Institutions are required to provide a system of due process to their students, and charges and refund policies are legitimately a part of that process. Students and parents should be informed regularly of procedures for requesting information concerning exceptions to published policies.

American Council on Education
August 1979

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Operational Policies adopted by WASC and the Commission affect the organization and conduct of business of the Accrediting Commission.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENERAL AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

(Adopted October 1964, Revised January 1978)

Each institution must be free to decide for itself whether or not to seek accreditation by any particular agency. If an institution desires both general (regional) accreditation and specialized program accreditation, the Commission may collaborate with the specialized accrediting agency in arranging joint visitation and exchange of information.

An institution should not interpret its general accreditation as validating a specialized program in the same manner as specialized accreditation, which by its very nature is a more intensive evaluation process.

A specialized institution may request regional accreditation through ACCJC if it meets the Commission's conditions for eligibility.

PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY

(Adopted June 1978)

Meetings of the Commission are open to the public, except when it is deliberating and acting on matters concerning specific individuals or institutions. Institutional representatives and other interested persons are invited to attend these meetings at which the Commission considers, among other matters, all questions of policy and procedure.

The Executive Director will mail a preliminary agenda 45 days before each regular meeting of the Commission to the chief executive and liaison officer of all candidate and accredited institutions approved by the Commission with the request that the agenda be posted or otherwise publicized.

Observers will be seated at Commission meetings as space allows. If they wish to speak, observers must give advance notice to the Executive Director and include the agenda item which they wish to address. Any specific reference to an individual or to an institution must be made in executive sessions, and the individual or institution will be given an opportunity to be present or to have a representative present. Verbal participation by observers at Commission meetings is limited to:

1. Prepared statements noted by the Executive Director in the agenda at appropriate places. Written copies of all prepared remarks should be left with the Executive Director.
2. Brief comments on specific points in the public agenda, given at the end of Commission discussion of the same topic.

Individuals who wish to bring items to the attention of the Commission which are not on the agenda should present, not less than 30 days before Commission meetings, a written statement to the Executive Director with a request that said item(s) be placed on the agenda. If individuals wish to meet with members of the Commission, they should so advise the Executive Director not less than 30 days before the Commission meeting. The Executive Director will then, time constraints permitting, arrange for two Commissioners to meet with the individual(s) to discuss the matter(s) of concern preceding the meeting of the Commission. The two Commissioners will report to the Commission as a whole and may recommend a presentation before the full Commission at an appropriate time.

COORDINATING GUIDELINES
FOR THE WASC POSTSECONDARY ACCREDITING COMMISSIONS

1. Commission of Jurisdiction

- For an institution which offers a combination of secondary and lower division college programs, the Commission for Community and Junior Colleges will assume jurisdiction, consulting with the Commission for Schools. ACCJC will also retain jurisdiction of institutions offering limited upper division work which does not lead to a degree.
- For an institution which offers lower division programs but is adding one or more upper division baccalaureate degree programs and/or any graduate level work, the Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities will assume jurisdiction, consulting with the Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

2. Evaluation and Recognition

- When an institution has been accredited or recognized as a candidate by the Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and moves to a higher level, the Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities will conduct an evaluation in cooperation with the Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. The Senior Commission standards and procedures will be used by the institution and the accrediting team.
- The institution will continue to be listed under the original level. At such time as the total institution qualifies for recognition by a higher commission, it will come under that commission's jurisdiction. Generally, the institution has three years in which to effect a transfer.

Adopted by WASC Board of Directors, July 1988

CODE OF COMMISSION GOOD PRACTICE AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

(Adopted June 1980)

In carrying out its functions, the Commission has established a code of good practice, both for its relations with institutions which it serves, and with regard to its internal organization and procedures.

In its relations with the institutions it accredits, the Commission is committed to:

1. Make an initial visit to, or evaluation of, an institution only on the written request of the chief executive officer of the institution.
2. Revisit an institution only on request by the chief executive, or, if a visit is initiated by the Commission, after due notice to the institution.
3. Permit withdrawal of a request for initial candidacy or initial accreditation at any time (even after evaluation) prior to final action by the Commission.
4. Appraise institutions in the light of their own stated purposes so long as these are within the general frame of reference of postsecondary education and consistent with the standards of the Commission.
5. Use relevant qualitative and quantitative information in evaluation.
6. Interpret standards for accreditation in ways that are relevant to the character of the particular institution, respecting institutional integrity and diversity.
7. Encourage sound educational innovation.
8. Assist and stimulate improvement in the educational effectiveness of the institution.
9. Emphasize the value and importance of institutional self study.
10. Conduct evaluation visits by experienced and qualified examiners under conditions which, insofar as reasonably possible, assure impartial and objective judgment, avoiding conflict of interest.
11. Include on evaluation teams representation from other institutions of similar purpose and academic program.
12. Provide institutions an opportunity to object, for cause, to individual members assigned to the team designated to visit the institution, with special concern for possible conflict of interest.

13. Consider the names of evaluators recommended for service on a particular team or for general accrediting service.
14. Arrange consultation during the visit with administration, staff, students, and trustees, and include a publicized opportunity for an open hearing during the visit.
15. Protect the confidentiality of the institutional self study and evaluation team report. An institution, at its discretion, may make such documents public. In event of a negative action, the Commission staff will attempt to reach agreement with the institution on a statement for public distribution, but the Commission reserves final authority in case of an impasse. Should the institution issue selective and biased releases or use the public forum to take issue with negative actions, the Commission and its staff will be free to make all the documents public.
16. Provide opportunity for the institution to respond in writing to the team report before it is completed, and to appear before the Commission when it is considered. The Commission staff will notify an institution in writing as soon as reasonably possible regarding Commission decisions.
17. Provide an opportunity for institutional representatives and the general public to attend those portions of Commission meetings devoted to policy matters and others of a non-confidential nature.
18. Encourage discussion and use on campus of major team recommendations.
19. Revoke accreditation only after advance written notice to the institution.
20. Provide opportunity for Commission review of its negative decisions, and, in addition, for appeal of decisions to deny or terminate candidacy to a panel established by the WASC Board.
21. Refrain from conditioning candidacy or accreditation upon payment of fees for purposes other than annual fees and evaluation costs.
22. Encourage continuing close relationships and communication between the Commission and institutions through the establishment of liaison officer positions in each institution, with appropriate visibility and responsibility.

The Commission insists that its members recognize their ethical responsibilities by accepting and subscribing to the defined purposes of accreditation; respecting the confidentiality of relationships between the Commission and the institutions it accredits; refraining from discussing institutional matters learned through the accrediting process with anyone other than commissioners, the staff, the visiting teams, and the institutions concerned; protecting the confidentiality of all documents that come from the staff in preparation for meetings, or that are distributed at meetings when these are clearly of a confidential nature; and

committing themselves to full disclosure and restraint in any Commission consideration involving conflict of interest. Members of the Commission will absent themselves from deliberations or vote on decisions regarding the individual institutions of which they are employees or trustees. They shall not participate in deliberation or vote on decisions in which they have any other personal interest that might reasonably appear to suggest divided loyalties or otherwise impair their independent, unbiased judgment. Any such potential conflict of interest shall be reported to the Commission by the commissioner in advance of deliberation and/or action and shall be recorded in the Commission minutes. Any commissioner who is uncertain regarding the possible appearance of conflict of interest shall request the Commission to determine the matter by majority vote. Such request and decision shall be duly noted in Commission minutes.

These restrictions are not intended to disqualify participation by a commissioner in the general run of cases which do not directly or substantially affect the institution with which he/she is associated or its competitive position with a neighboring institution under review.

The Commission expects that Commission members will accept and carry out the responsibilities of membership, including:

1. Attending, when possible, all Commission meetings for their entire duration.
2. Studying documents as assigned prior to the meetings and serving as readers by arrangement.
3. Voting according to best personal judgment in the light of existing policy.
4. Respecting the confidentiality of relations between the Commission and the institutions it accredits.
5. Assisting in interpreting accreditation.
6. On occasion accepting appointment to the Senior and the Schools Commissions, to the WASC Board, and to membership on evaluation teams.
7. Serving on *ad hoc* or permanent committees of the Commission.
8. Assisting the staff in training programs and other activities.
9. Resigning from the Commission if circumstances change so that time no longer permits the full responsibilities of membership.
10. Absenting themselves from deliberations or vote when a potential conflict of interest exists because of affiliation, previous relationships or consultant services.

ACCREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONS AND SYSTEMS

(Adopted October 1972, Revised June 1980, June 1985, June 1987)

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and the other regional commissions have historically accredited colleges or schools rather than districts or systems. In accord with this position, institutions which are under the general control of a parent institution or a central administration in a multi-unit system are classified as operationally separate and require separate accreditation if they:

1. Have an organizational structure which is not a part of another unit in the system and which includes a core of full-time faculty, a separate student body, and a resident administration.
2. Offer a program or programs leading to degrees.

Such institution's units will be listed separately in regional and national directories. The Commission reserves the right to make the final judgment on the determination of separate units.

Units classified as operationally separate which currently share the accreditation of a parent institution or system continue in that status until they can be examined. The Commission will schedule evaluations as soon as practicable. New operationally separate units are expected to seek separate affiliation or accreditation.

Newly founded unaccredited units in multiple-campus systems and institutions, which merge or affiliate with an accredited institution, are not considered accredited if they are operationally separate as defined above. These institutions are expected to seek affiliation or accreditation through the usual procedures.

Programs not classified as operationally separate by the Commission are included in the Commission's evaluation of the parent institution, regardless of location. Commissions in other regions where such programs are located may be invited to send representatives.

The above policies for the accreditation of operationally separate units apply to institutions located within the United States and in foreign countries.

Evaluation of Multi-Unit Systems*

In order to achieve a more effective evaluation of institutions which are part of multi-unit systems, the Commission will consider the following options:

*If a system headquarters desires a separate evaluation of its operations, a request should be submitted to the Executive Director. The fee for this evaluation will be based on actual costs.

1. Institutional evaluation with system office and board participation.
2. Evaluating all institutions simultaneously with system office and board participation.
3. Evaluating the institutions on a defined schedule with system office and board participation.

Systems desiring to use options two or three should, in consultation with the Commission Executive Director, develop a proposal which meets the following criteria:

1. Faculty and support staff from the operating unit are involved in developing the proposal.
2. The self study process involves broad participation by the various constituencies in the evaluation and planning activities.
3. The governing board of the system approves the proposal by resolution.

In addition, requests for a separate evaluation of the system are encouraged.

COMMISSION PROCEDURES IN MATTERS OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS
AND INTEGRITY

(Adopted January 1976)

Accrediting commissions have an obligation to assure themselves that any institution which seeks candidacy, accreditation, extension of candidacy, or reaffirmation of accreditation conducts its affairs with honesty and frankness.

When the Commission has cause to believe that any institution with which it is concerned is acting in an unethical manner or is deliberately misrepresenting itself to students or public, it will investigate the matter and provide the institution an opportunity to explain the alleged abuse. If, on the basis of such investigation and after notice to the institution and opportunity for institutional response, the Commission finds that an institution has engaged in unethical conduct or that its integrity has been seriously undermined, the Commission will:

1. With regard to an institution which is an applicant, but is not yet a candidate or accredited, break off relations.
2. With regard to a candidate or an accredited institution, either
 - a. Issue a show cause order with a time stated, or
 - b. In extreme cases, immediately sever its relationship with the institution by denying or terminating candidacy or accreditation.

The institution may appeal the decision of the Commission in accordance with the WASC appeals process.

INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION LIAISON OFFICER
(Adopted June 1974)

Each accredited and candidate institution should designate a campus accreditation liaison officer to work with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and coordinate all accreditation activities. The chief administrator may name a person from the staff or assume this responsibility. The accreditation liaison officer can provide an effective means of communication between the institution and the Commission and more direct participation in the accreditation process.

The duties of the accreditation liaison officer are:

1. To coordinate the institution's self study and other preparations made in advance of initial or renewal of accreditation, assist in follow-up studies resulting from the evaluation, and notify the Commission of substantive changes and program developments as they occur.
2. To meet occasionally with the Commission staff to discuss policies, procedures, and other matters pertaining to evaluation and accreditation.
3. To provide an identified person on campus to disseminate information and answer questions about evaluation and accreditation.
4. To assist in the preparation and sending of the institutional annual report to the Commission.
5. To assist the institution in the coordination of accreditation activities for regional and specialized agencies.

Presidents may prefer to delegate the responsibility to a member of the college faculty or administrative staff who is interested in evaluation and accreditation, and who will report to the president on all relevant activities.

The accreditation liaison officer should receive a suitable degree of visibility on campus.

SPECIAL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS AND CONSIDERATION
OF COMPLAINTS

(Adopted June 1972, Revised January 1984)

Accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges is an expression of confidence that an institution is satisfactorily achieving its objectives and is coping with its problems. However, there may be circumstances which require special review by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

1. ACCJC may request an interim report or schedule a special visit or an earlier full team visit if, in the judgment of the Commission, substantive changes in the institution or conditions seem to justify a reevaluation of a college's efforts to solve specific problems. Topics or areas to be considered will be delineated when the report is requested and/or a visit is scheduled.
2. Disruption of the work of an institution by forces beyond its control, although not condoned, will not result in summary loss of accreditation. Prolonged inability, for whatever reasons, to conduct its academic programs will require a review of the institution and a reconsideration of its accreditation.
3. The Commission considers complaints regarding member institutions only when the reported conditions are substantially documented and are such as to jeopardize the quality of the educational program, the general welfare of the institution, or raise significant questions about the institution's compliance with accreditation standards. The Commission assumes no responsibility for adjudicating individual grievances; however, it may investigate individual complaints and reports to determine whether they reflect conditions within an institution that affect the quality of its programs or are detrimental to the general welfare.

The following procedures will be used in reviewing complaints regarding member institutions:

- a. When a verbal complaint regarding a member institution is received, the person is advised of the policy statement and requested to submit the complain in writing with substantial documentation to the Executive Director of the Commission.
- b. When a written complaint regarding a member institution is received, the Executive Director acknowledges receipt of the complaint in writing, and sends a copy of the written complaint to the Commission chairperson.
- c. Within 10 days of receipt, the Executive Director analyzes the complaint to determine if there is adequate documentation and if, where appropriate, institutional appeals procedures have been utilized. In case adequate documentation is not provided, the complainant is notified in writing that

complaints can be considered only when reported conditions are substantially documented and are such as to jeopardize the quality of the educational program or the general welfare of the institution. In case institutional appeal procedures have not been utilized, the complainant is advised to do so first.

- d. When the complaint is substantially documented, the chief executive of the institution is notified in writing by the Executive Director, a copy of the complaint is enclosed, and a written response is requested within 30 days.
 - e. When the response from the chief executive of the institution is received, the Executive Director compares the documentation provided by the complainant and the institution and, where appropriate, suggests a resolution of the matter to the complainant and the institution.
 - f. When an institution responds satisfactorily to the complaint, the information is shared with the complainant within 10 days of receipt, and both the institution and the complainant are advised of the final disposition.
 - g. When the response from the institution is considered to be inadequate, the matter is referred to the Commission for consideration and action.
4. Should the report of an evaluation team, an interim visit team, or special deliberations of the Commission lead to a recommendation to withhold accreditation or to change existing accreditation status, the institution has available the review and appeal procedures of ACCJC and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. (See Article VI, "Appeals," WASC Constitution.)

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

(Adopted October 1972, Revised January 1978)

A substantive change in an accredited institution is defined as one which affects significantly the nature of the institution, its objectives and educational programs, and the allocation of its resources. Substantive changes include, but are not limited to, the following: Changes in form of control of the institution; offering of programs at a more advanced level; a move to a new location, or establishment of major off-campus units; the initiation of external degree programs; significant departures from stated purposes and/or educational programs operative at the time of the most recent evaluation.

An institution planning a substantive change is asked to consult with the Commission through its Executive Director. The institution and the Commission may then take the steps necessary to assure an orderly transition consistent with ACCJC's policies. Substantive change may involve a review of the accredited status of the institution by the Commission.

COMMISSION DECISIONS ON INSTITUTIONS

(Adopted June 1981)

Once the Commission has made a decision regarding candidacy or accreditation of an institution, it will notify the institution in writing as promptly as possible. The forms of possible Commission action with regard to institutions are:

1. An institution is granted candidacy or is accredited.
2. Its candidacy is extended or its accreditation is reaffirmed.
3. Its candidacy is not renewed or its accreditation is terminated.
4. The institution is placed on probation effective at a specific date.
5. It is given a show cause order, with accreditation to terminate unless response or compliance has satisfied the Commission prior to a specified date.
6. The institution's application for candidacy or accreditation is denied.

All such Commission actions are made public and are published in appropriate manners. In addition, an institution may be given a private warning if Commission concerns are significant but less serious than those calling for probation.

If an institution so conducts its affairs that they become a matter of public concern, or uses the public forum to take issue with a negative action of the Commission relating to that institution, the Commission may announce, through the Executive Director the action taken, and the basis for that action, making public any pertinent information available to it.

NEGATIVE ACTIONS OF THE COMMISSION
(Adopted January 1977, Revised June 1978, June 1980)

When measured against the criteria or policies of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, an institution may, in the opinion of the Commission, be found wanting. The nature and gravity of the deficiency will determine whether or not in the judgment of the Commission one of the following five negative actions should be taken:

1. Candidacy or Accreditation Withheld. The candidacy or accreditation of an initial applicant or reapplicant institution may be withheld by a deferral or a denial.
 - a. A deferral is not a final decision. It is interlocutory in nature to provide further guidance and time for the institutions to correct certain deficiencies.
 - b. A denial is a final decision which is subject to review by the Commission and subsequent appeal to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges under the published policies and procedures of these two bodies.
2. Warning. When the Commission finds that an institution has pursued a course deviating from the Commission's criteria or policies to an extent that gives concern to the Commission, it may issue a warning to the institution to correct its deficiencies, refrain from certain activities, or initiate certain activities within a stated period of time. A warning does not affect the candidate or accredited status of the institution.
3. Probation. When a candidate or accredited institution fails to respond to conditions imposed upon it by the Commission, including a warning, or when it deviates significantly from the Commission's criteria or policies but not to such an extent as to warrant a show cause order or the withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation, it may be placed on probation for a specified period of time. While on probation, the institution will be subject to special scrutiny by the Commission, including a requirement to submit periodic prescribed reports and special visit(s) by representatives of the Commission. If the institution has not taken steps satisfactory to the Commission to remove the cause or causes for its probation at the end of the specified time, the Commission will issue a show cause order. Probation does not affect the candidate or accredited status of the institution.
4. Show Cause. When the Commission finds an institution to be in substantial non-compliance with its criteria or policies or when the institution has not responded to the conditions imposed by the Commission, the Commission may ask the institution to show cause why its candidacy should not be terminated or be allowed to lapse or its accreditation withdrawn at the end of a stated

period. In such cases, the burden of proof will rest on the institution to demonstrate why its candidacy or accreditation should be continued. While under show cause, the institution will be subject to special scrutiny by the Commission, including a requirement to submit periodic prescribed reports and special visit(s) by representatives of the Commission. A show cause order does not affect the candidate or accredited status of the institution.

5. Revocation of Candidacy or Termination of Accreditation. If, in the judgment of the Commission, an institution has not satisfactorily explained or corrected matters of which it has been given notice, its candidacy may be revoked or allowed to lapse or its accreditation terminated. In such a case, the institution must complete again the entire accreditation process to qualify for candidacy or accreditation. Non-renewal or revocation of candidacy or termination of accreditation is subject to review and appeal under the applicable policies and procedures of the Commission and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. If an institution's candidacy is not renewed or is revoked or if its accreditation is terminated, its status will continue unchanged if it requests a review and later an appeal until the review and appeal processes have been completed. Otherwise, its candidacy or accreditation ends on the date when the time period permitting such a request expires.

In all cases of negative action, the Commission will give the institution written reasons for its decision.

The Commission will announce publicly, as appropriate, through its Executive Director and will publish in the WASC Bulletin and in the WASC annual Directory the status of each institution subject to a negative action (except warning) in accordance with the Commission's policy on "Disclosure and Confidentiality of Information," as revised in June 1978. The Executive Director will attempt to reach agreement with the institution on a public statement to be used by both parties. However, the Commission reserves final authority in event of impasse.

If a specific inquiry is made about an institution which has been warned, placed on probation, or issued a show cause order, the Executive Director shall inform the inquirer that a negative action has been taken and the reasons therefore.

REVIEW OF COMMISSION ACTIONS
(Adopted January 1977, Revised January 1979)

Institutions whose applications for candidacy, renewal of candidacy, accreditation, or reaffirmation of accreditation are denied or whose candidacy or accreditation is terminated by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges may request a review of the Commission's decision. Such a review must be requested prior to filing of an appeal by the institution to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The following procedures will govern the conduct of the Commission's review:

1. If the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges decides to take any of the actions listed above, its Executive Director will notify the institution concerned of the decision by certified mail, return receipt requested, within approximately seven calendar days of the Commission's decision. Said notification shall contain a succinct statement of the reasons for the Commission's decision.
2. If the institution wishes a review by the Commission, it shall file with the Executive Director a request for such a review under the policies and procedures of the Commission. This request should be submitted by the chief executive officer of the institution and, in the case of private institutions, co-signed by the chairperson of the governing board. Requests for review by an institution in a multi-college system shall be co-signed by the chief executive officer of the system. This request must be received by certified mail, return receipt requested, within twenty-eight calendar days of the date of the mailing of the Commission's notification to the institution of its decision.
3. Within twenty-one calendar days after the date of its request for a review, the institution, through its chief administrative officer, must submit a written statement of the reasons why, in the institution's opinion, a review of the Commission's decision is warranted. As a general rule, this written statement should respond only to the Commission's statement of the reasons for the Commission's decision and to the evidence that was before the Commission at the time of its decision. However, if the institution believes that there are compelling reasons to expand the scope of the response or if it wishes to introduce new evidence which may have been generated or discovered since the time of the Commission's decision, it may do so in a separate section of its response.
4. On receipt of the institution's written statement referred to in paragraph 3, the chairperson of the Commission will select a review committee of three or more persons. A roster of the review committee will be sent to the institution normally within twenty-one calendar days of the date of the Commission's receipt of the institution's written statement.

5. Within a reasonable period of time after the review committee has been selected, the Executive Director will schedule a visit to the institution by the review committee.
6. Prior to the visit to the institution, the review committee will review available information. If additional information is needed, the chairperson of the review committee may request such information from the chief executive officer of the institution.
7. The review visit will be investigative and designed to determine if the Commission's decision was substantially supported by the evidence before the Commission at the time of the Commission's decision. If, however, in the judgment of the review committee, changes have occurred which might materially affect the decision of the Commission, the review committee chairperson, with the approval of the members, may accept new evidence bearing on these changes.
8. The committee should open and close its visit with a meeting with the chief executive officer of the institution. At the closing meeting the chairperson should, among other matters, attempt to ascertain whether or not the institution has any complaints about any aspect of the visit.
9. The committee should prepare a report which cites and evaluates the evidence which the committee considers relevant to the question of whether the Commission's original decision was substantially supported by the evidence before the Commission at the time of its decision. If the committee accepts evidence of changes which occurred subsequent to the committee's original decision, the review committee should include a summary and analysis of such evidence in its report identifying it as new evidence and describing the weight given it.
10. The chairperson of the review committee will submit a copy of the committee's report which is referred to in paragraph 9 to the chief executive officer of the institution, the chairperson of the institution's governing board, and the Executive Director of the Commission, normally within twenty-one calendar days of the end of the review committee's visit.
11. Within fourteen calendar days of the institution's receipt of the review committee's report, the chief executive officer may submit a written response to the Executive Director of the Commission, with a copy to the chairperson of the review committee. Failure of the institution to submit a response shall constitute an acceptance by the institution of the Commission's original decision.
12. In a confidential letter to the Commission, the review committee shall make one of the following recommendations:

- a. The decision of the Commission was substantially supported by the evidence before the Commission at the time of the Commission's decision.
- b. The decision of the Commission was not substantially supported by the evidence before the Commission at the time of the Commission's decision.
- c. The decision of the Commission was substantially supported by the evidence available at the time of the Commission's decision but the institution has taken significant steps to improve conditions and remedy deficiencies and the Commission should reevaluate its decision in light of these steps.

The recommendation of the review committee to the Commission shall not be disclosed to the institution being reviewed. The recommendation is not binding on the Commission.

- 13. The chief executive officer of the institution and a limited number of his staff will be invited to meet with the two readers of the committee's report and the chairperson of the review committee shortly before the meeting of the Commission at which the report will be acted upon. Discussion at this preliminary meeting will be confined to the report of the review committee referred to in section 9 and the institution's response to this report.
- 14. The two readers will report the substance of this meeting to the Commission when it meets. If institutional representatives wish to appear before the Commission at that time, their request will be granted, but the meeting with the readers is intended to obviate the need for such an appearance except in unusual circumstances.
- 15. In making its decision on the institution's status, the Commission will consider the evidence available to it and then reach a final decision to (a) reaffirm its original decision; (b) modify it; or (c) reverse it. As soon after the meeting as practicable, the Executive Director will notify the chief executive officer of the institution by certified mail of the Commission's decision.
- 16. The decision of the Commission, referred to in paragraph 15, shall be final as far as the accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges is concerned. However, if the institution remains aggrieved, it may file an appeal with the President of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges through the Executive Director of the Commission in accordance with the provisions of Article VI of the Constitution of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
- 17. An institution retains its accredited or candidate status until the review process of the Commission is completed. If the institution files a subsequent

appeal with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, its status remains unchanged until that appeal has been heard and decided.

18. The cost of the review will be borne by the institution. The request for a review must be accompanied by a deposit set by the Commission. If the actual cost is less than this amount, the excess will be refunded. If it is greater, the institution will be billed for the difference.

DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

(Adopted January 1976, Revised June 1978)

It is the obligation of every institution applying for candidacy, extension of candidacy, accreditation, or reaffirmation of accreditation and of every candidate or accredited institution to provide the Commission with access to all parts of its operations, with due regard for the rights of individual privacy, and with complete and accurate information with respect to the institution's affairs, including reports of other accrediting, licensing, and auditing agencies. Failure to do so, or to make complete, accurate, and honest disclosure, is sufficient reason in and of itself to deny or revoke candidacy or accreditation.

The Commission will maintain inviolate the confidentiality of information supplied by the institution except in those rare cases where it is deemed necessary by the Commission to make public information which forms a substantive basis for the Commission's decision.

The Commission may announce publicly, as appropriate, through its Executive Director and will publish in the WASC Bulletin and/or annual Directory the fact that:

1. An institution has been granted candidacy or accredited.
2. Its candidacy has not been extended or its accreditation reaffirmed.
3. Its candidacy has not been renewed or its accreditation has been terminated.
4. The institution has been placed on probation.
5. The institution has been given a show cause order effective at a specific date.
6. The institution's application for candidacy or accreditation has been denied.

If an institution so conducts its affairs that they become a matter of public concern, the Commission may announce, through its Executive Director, any action the Commission has taken and the basis for that action, making public any pertinent information available to it.

POLICY REGARDING MATTERS UNDER LITIGATION

(Adopted January 1989)

It is the policy of the Accrediting Commission not to become involved in litigation within an institution. The Commission is not an adjudicatory agency, and it is not the role or function of the Commission to arrive at any determination regarding the merits of any aspect of pending litigation. The Commission's concerns are to determine whether an institution is in compliance with Commission standards and to assist institutions, through established procedures, in the improvement of quality.

Because of the sensitivities created when litigation is pending during a site visit by an evaluation team, the Commission has developed the following guidelines.

Responsibility of the Institution

It is the responsibility of the institution to inform the Commission staff, prior to a visit, of any pending litigation against the institution. The staff will consult with the liaison officer to determine if any special advice will need to be provided to the team chair.

Responsibility of Visiting Teams

Visiting teams should not comment on pending litigation in such a way as to express an opinion about the merits of the lawsuit or its outcome. Team members are not precluded from meeting with individuals involved in litigation and hearing from them regarding the litigation. If such a meeting is held or if the subject of the litigation arises during the course of interviews, the institution will be informed. Team members are cautioned against saying or writing anything which may be used by either party in support of their positions in the lawsuit.

If questions arise prior to, during, or after a visit, Commission staff should be consulted.

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP AND PROCEDURES
(Adopted January 1985; Revised January 1988)

Commission Membership

Commissioners other than state system representatives are appointed for overlapping three-year terms in accordance with WASC Constitution Article III, Section 3b. Appointments are limited to two three-year terms, unless the person is elected an officer, in which case an additional three-year term may be served.

If a Commissioner because of a change of status does not meet the requirement for the category to which appointed, a replacement appointment shall be made, effective on July 1 following the change.

Replacement appointments made for any reason shall be for the unexpired term.

Commission Officers

The officers shall consist of a chairperson and a vice chairperson elected annually by the Commission. The term of office is limited to two years. The vice chairperson shall represent a different constituency from the chairperson and shall serve as chair-elect. Officers shall be elected from Commissioners serving three-year terms.

APPOINTMENT PROCEDURE

Vacancies Noted

The Executive Director shall inform the Commission at the winter meeting about terms of office due to expire at the end of the following June. In February a letter will be sent by the Director to chief executive officers, accrediting liaison officers, and district and local academic senate presidents of member institutions, to major organizations, and to individuals known to be interested. The letter shall announce vacant positions on the Commission and will indicate those positions occupied by Commissioners eligible for reappointment. Institutional and organizational representatives may submit nominations, and individuals may also submit applications. The notice will be distributed to organizations for inclusion in their publications.

All applicants and nominees will be asked to submit the following by April 1:

- (1) A letter of application, stating their interest in the Commission
- (2) A completed ACCJC data form
- (3) Optional - A professional resume and/or letter of recommendation.

Nominating Committee

The committee, established pursuant to Section 3b of the WASC Constitution, shall meet to consider nominees and applicants and to select a slate to be recommended to the Commission at the June meeting.

The chairperson of the Commission shall designate a member of the Nominating Committee to serve as its chair.

The Executive Director shall serve as the nonvoting secretary of the Nominating Committee.

The Commission shall receive the list of nominees and shall forward the list to the WASC Board of Directors who will make the appointments to the Commission.

Conflict of Interest

Commissioners shall absent themselves from the meeting when an institution with which they have any formal relationship is under review.

Commissioners who have participated as a team member in an institutional evaluation may take part in the Commission review but shall not participate in the vote.

EVALUATION TEAM ASSOCIATES

(Adopted January 1985, Revised June 1987)

An evaluation team associate serves in a confidential capacity with the team, has access to all materials connected with the evaluation, is included in all the team's conferences, but does not contribute formally to the team's evaluation report or to its recommendation concerning accreditation. Institutions preparing for an accreditation review often find it useful to send an administrator or faculty person as an associate during the year preceding their own evaluation visit. The associate appointment itself provides a valuable professional experience for any educator.

Expenses incurred by an associate are to be covered by the associate or by the institution or organization that requested that the associate participate with the team.

PART IV

APPENDIX

ACCREDITATION AGENCIES AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

1. Western Association of Schools and Colleges*

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is one of six regional accrediting associations that cover the United States, whose purpose is continual improvement of education and cooperation among educational institutions and agencies.

WASC was formed July 1, 1962, for the purpose of evaluation and accreditation of schools, colleges, and universities in California, Hawaii, and Pacific Island areas.

WASC functions through a board of directors and three accrediting commissions. The board of directors consists of nine members, three of whom are elected by each of the WASC commissions. The board annually elects one of its members to be chairperson of the board and president of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. It also elects a secretary-treasurer, who is usually the executive director of one of the three accrediting commissions.

The board of directors and the secretary-treasurer are responsible for the annual publication of the WASC Directory, which lists WASC-accredited and candidate institutions.

Each commission develops its own standards, procedures, and fiscal policies, under the authority of and subject to the approval of the WASC Board of Directors.

Those institutions which have been evaluated by commissions and have received approval are accredited by WASC. Any such accreditation shall cease whenever an institution is dropped from the accredited list of the association, or fails to pay its annual fees, or requests in writing that its accreditation be terminated.

The WASC office is located at 3060 Valencia Road, Aptos, CA 95003. Mailing address is P.O. Box 70, Aptos, CA 95001. Telephone (408) 688-7701, FAX (408) 688-1841. The WASC office is administrated by John C. Petersen, Secretary-Treasurer.

*For the list of WASC candidate and accredited institutions, see the official WASC Directory.

The three accrediting commissions of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges are:

a. Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

Stephen S. Weiner is the Executive Director, and the Commission maintains an office on the campus of Mills College. The mailing address is Post Office Box 9990, Oakland, California 94613. The telephone number is (415) 632-5000.

b. Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

John C. Petersen is the Executive Director, and the Commission office is located at 3060 Valencia Avenue, Aptos, California 95003. The mailing address is Post Office Box 70, Aptos, California 95001. The telephone number is (408) 688-7575.

c. Accrediting Commission for Schools

Donald E. Halverson is the Executive Director. The Commission office is at 1606 Rollins Road, Burlingame, California 94010. The telephone number is (415) 697-7711.

2. Other Regional Commissions in the United States

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104. Telephone (215) 662-5606. Executive Director, Howard L. Simmons.

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, Charles M. Cook, Director of Evaluation; Commission on Vocational, Technical, Career Institutions, Daniel S. Maloney, Director of Evaluation. The Sanborn House, 15 High Street, Winchester, Massachusetts 01890. Telephone (617) 729-6762

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, 159 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60601. Telephone (312) 263-0456, (800) 621-7440. Executive Director, Patricia A. Thrash.

Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Colleges, 3700-B University Way, N.E., Seattle, Washington 98105. Telephone (206) 543-0195. Executive Director, Joseph A. Malik.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges, James T. Rogers, Executive Director; Commission on Occupational Education

Institutions, Kenneth W. Tidwell, Executive Director. 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033. Telephone (404) 329-6500.

3. The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA)

COPA is a non-governmental organization intended to foster and facilitate the role of all recognized postsecondary accrediting agencies in promoting and ensuring the quality and diversity of American postsecondary education. the accrediting agencies, while established and supported by their institutions, are intended to serve the broader interests of society as well. To achieve these ends, COPA recognizes, coordinates, and periodically reviews the work of its member accrediting agencies, determines the appropriateness of existing or proposed accrediting activities and performs other related functions in accord with its bylaws.

The endorsement and certification of regional accrediting by COPA reflects the long-standing reciprocity among the regional associations in recognition of accredited status. Candidacy or accreditation of an institution by one regional agency has long been accepted and respected in the other regions as evidence that the institution's performance in the accomplishment of its purposes is satisfactory. The publication of a national list of candidate and accredited institutions by COPA places general institutional accreditation in a national as well as a regional context.

COPA's activities are managed by its board, which is composed of public representatives and representatives from regional accrediting commissions of higher education, specialized postsecondary agencies, and national education associations.

The President of COPA is Dr. Thurston E. Manning, and the Office is located at One Dupont Circle, Suite 305, Washington, D.C. 20036. Telephone (202) 452-1433.



REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

CONSTITUTION

(As Amended, July 1988)

ARTICLE I. Name and Purpose

This organization shall be entitled WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES. Its purpose is to promote the welfare, interests, and development of elementary, secondary, and higher education through (1) improvement of educational programs, (2) close cooperation among the schools, colleges, and universities within the territory it undertakes to serve, (3) certification of accreditation or candidacy status, and (4) effective working relationships with other educational organizations and accrediting agencies.

ARTICLE II. Accrediting Region and Certification

Section 1. The accrediting region of the Association consists of the states of California and Hawaii, the territories of Guam, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands, the Pacific Basin, and East Asia, and areas of the Pacific and East Asia where American-International schools or colleges may apply, and such other areas as may apply to it for service, subject to approval by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Any university, college, or school shall be certified by the Board of Directors as a candidate or accredited institution upon report of action taken by the appropriate Accrediting Commission. Any such certification shall cease whenever an institution resigns, is dropped from the accredited or candidate list of the Association, or fails to pay its annual fees by the date set by the appropriate Accrediting Commission for payment.

ARTICLE III. Organization

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of nine persons, three to be selected for staggered three-year terms from and by each of the three Accrediting Commissions hereinafter named and described. One of each Commission's appointees shall be its Chair or Assistant/Vice Chair. The Board shall elect its Chair from among its members for a one-year term. The Chair may be re-elected for one additional one-year term, but may not serve more than two such terms in succession. The Chair of the Board shall be the President of the Association. The Secretary-Treasurer of the Association shall be selected by the Board.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall meet annually at such time as may be determined by the Board, and may hold other meetings at the call of the Chair or on the request of any three members of the Board of Directors.

Section 3. There shall be three accrediting Commissions, as follows:

a. Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities.

This Commission shall consist of members appointed for overlapping three-year terms by the Western College Association, one of whom shall be named Chair. One member shall be appointed from either the present or former Commission membership by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. One member shall be appointed from either the present or former Commission membership by the Accrediting Commission for Schools. The Pacific Basin, the Northwest region, and the general public shall also be represented. The President of the Western College Association shall be an *ex officio* member.

Nominations for members of the Commission shall be solicited from member institutions by a Nominating Committee, appointed by the Western College Association Executive Committee and composed of: the President Elect of the Western College Association, the Chair of the Commission, the Western College Association Executive Secretary-Treasurer, and faculty, administrative, and public representatives. The Executive Committee shall ensure that there is a balance on the Nominating Committee among public and independent institutions.

Members of the Commission shall be allowed to complete their terms upon retirement from their institutions. Non-public Commissioners who lose their institutional base for any reason or who move out of the WASC region or the Northwest region, in the case of members appointed from that region, shall be ineligible to serve beyond the end of the academic year.

b. Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

This Commission shall consist of seventeen members. The Chancellor for California Community Colleges and the President of the University of Hawaii shall each appoint one member. The Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities and the Accrediting Commission for Schools shall each appoint a present or former member from their respective commissions. The remaining members, selected for overlapping three-year terms, shall be nominated by a special Nominating Committee and appointed by the WASC Board of Directors. At least five of the appointments shall be faculty; at least three of the appointments shall represent the public interest (with at least one having community college governing board experience); at least one of the appointments shall represent the independent institutions, one shall represent institutions in the Pacific Basin. The Nominating Committee shall consist of six members, two of whom shall be faculty, two administrators, and two public. The Commission Chair shall appoint two of these members from the Commission. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, the

California Chief Executive Officers, and the California Community College Trustees shall appoint respectively whatever additional faculty, administrative, and public members are required to complete the composition of the six-member committee. The Commission shall elect its own Chair.

c. Accrediting Commission for Schools.

This Commission shall consist of twenty-one persons selected for staggered three-year terms. Public school representatives shall be appointed as follows: Seven by the Association of California School Administrators (including representation from the district office level and school-site level); one bargaining unit member by the California Teachers' Association; one bargaining unit member by the California Federation of Teachers; one by the California Department of Education; one by the Department of Education, State of Hawaii; one school site administrator by the Hawaii Government Employees' Association. Private school representatives shall be appointed as follows: One by the California Association of Independent Schools; one by the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools; two by the Western Catholic Educational Association; and one by the Seventh-day Adventists. Public representatives shall be appointed as follows: One school board member by the California School Boards' Association; one parent by the California Congress of Parents and Teachers. The Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges shall each appoint a representative to the Commission. The Commission shall elect its own Chair.

If a change of status, which affects eligibility for constituency appointments of any of the above appointees occurs during the term of office, the individual may at the discretion of the appointing agency, serve the remainder of the term or may be replaced. A person completing a term after a change of status may not be reappointed.

Section 4. The Executive Director of each Accrediting Commission shall be appointed by the Commission. Changes in the size and composition of each Accrediting Commission may be made by the Commission with the approval of the Board of Directors. The composition of each Accrediting Commission shall be published in the annual Directory of the Association.

Section 5. Recognizing that the Board of Directors retains ultimate authority over administrative structures, budgets, fiscal policies, contracts and leases, including those entered into by the Accrediting Commissions, the Board may delegate actual management over such matters, including the actual review and approval of such matters, to the Commissions to the extent it deems prudent.

Section 6. Action taken by any Commission to deny or withdraw accreditation or candidacy shall be reported in writing to the WASC Board at its annual meeting.

ARTICLE IV. Criteria for Certification

Section 1. Each of the Accrediting Commissions shall adopt its own criteria, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors of the Association. The criteria shall provide for the evaluation of each institution on the basis of the degree to which it is accomplishing the purposes and functions outlined in its own statement of objectives, and on the appropriateness of those purposes and functions for an institution of its type.

Section 2. The actions by each Accrediting Commission, subject to its review procedures and the appeals procedures provided for in Article VI, shall be final and shall be certified by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V. Duties of Officers

Section 1. The Chair of the Board of Directors shall preside at all meetings of the Board and shall have the right to vote on all issues that come before the Board for decision. As President of the Association, he/she shall be the official spokesperson for the Association, representing the Association in accord with policies established by each of the three Accrediting Commissions and the Board.

Section 2. The Secretary-Treasurer shall serve as the Secretary of the Board of Directors and shall maintain a complete file of minutes and Board decisions. He/she shall receive from the Directors of the three Accrediting Commissions the lists of accredited and candidate institutions and shall provide for the publication of a total Association list of accredited and candidate institutions at least once each year.

Section 3. The Director of each of the three Accrediting Commissions shall maintain a careful record of the actions and decisions of the Commission, shall be responsible under the Commission's direction for the scheduling of accreditation visits, appointment of visiting committees, distribution of necessary accreditation materials, and for such other matters as the Commission may delegate to the Director for the effective administration of the Accreditation program. Following each meeting of the Commission at which accreditation decisions are made, the Director shall promptly notify the Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Directors of all changes in the list of accredited and candidate institutions. At its annual meeting the Board of Directors shall certify the list of accredited and candidate institutions submitted by each Accrediting Commission.

ARTICLE VI. Appeals

Section 1. The WASC Board of Directors shall elect annually a WASC Hearing Panel from which shall be selected a Hearing Board established for the purpose of deciding appeals by any institution against the decision of any of the WASC Commissions denying or withdrawing accreditation or candidacy. This Panel shall consist of twenty persons as follows: (1) five from elementary/secondary schools;

(2) five from junior or community colleges; (3) five from senior colleges and universities; and (4) five lay members of governing boards. None of the twenty shall be a current member of an Accrediting Commission.

- a. The Hearing Board shall consist of five persons, including at least one person from each of the above categories, selected on random basis from the Hearing Panel and appointed, after such selection, by the WASC President. None of those selected shall have been involved in the accreditation process which resulted in the appeal. The Hearing Board shall elect its Chair from its own membership. Each member, including the Chair, shall have one vote.
- b. Hearing Board members to replace those who are absent or have a conflict of interest shall be selected on the same random basis and appointed by the WASC President from the remaining members of the Hearing Panel.
- c. An institution making an appeal shall assume the necessary costs of the Hearing Board and shall deposit at the time it files its appeal an amount to be established annually by the WASC Board of Directors [(eight thousand dollars (\$8,000))] with the Secretary-Treasurer of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. In the event the necessary costs exceed the amount of the deposit, the institution shall be responsible for the balance or, in the event the deposit exceeds the necessary costs, the institution shall receive a refund in the amount of the difference.

Section 2. If an institution, after availing itself of any review or appeal procedures of its appropriate Commission, still believes itself aggrieved by that Commission's denial or withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation, its governing board may appeal such action within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of notice thereof to the President of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges through the appropriate Commission's Executive Director. During the period up to and including the appeal, the institution's status with the Commission shall remain the same as it was prior to the decision being appealed.

- a. The President of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges shall then arrange a hearing at the earliest practicable date for the representatives of the institution before the Association's Hearing Board, established for this purpose as prescribed in Article VI, Section I, of this Constitution.
- b. This hearing shall be informal and conducted under rules and procedures established by the WASC Board of Directors. Those testifying shall not be placed under oath. Legal counsel may be present as advisors but they shall not conduct the case as in a formal judicial proceeding.
- c. At least twenty (20) calendar days before the time set for the hearing of such an appeal, the President (or Secretary-Treasurer) of the Western

Association of Schools and Colleges shall cause notice of the time and place of the hearing to be mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the chairman or president of the governing board of the institution with a copy to the chief executive. Proof of notice shall be made at the hearing.

- d. Subject to limitations set forth below, representatives of the institution shall have an opportunity to present written documents, other evidence on the institution's behalf, oral testimony, and arguments. Representatives of the appropriate Commission and of the evaluation team shall have a similar opportunity to present evidence, oral testimony, and arguments on the Commission's behalf.
- e. The Hearing Board, in addition to considering evidence adduced at the hearing, will also consider the institution's self study report, the evaluation team report, and all other material relied upon by the Commission in reaching the decision which is being appealed, including the reports filed as a result of any internal Commission appeal process.
- f. The appeal shall be based on one or more of the following grounds: (1) there were errors or omissions in carrying out prescribed procedures on the part of the evaluation team and/or the Commission which materially affected the Commission's decision; (2) there was demonstrable bias or prejudice on the part of one or more members of the evaluation team or Commission which materially affected the Commission's decision; (3) the evidence before the Commission prior to and on the date when it made the decision which is being appealed was materially in error; or (4) the decision of the Commission was not supported by substantial evidence.
- g. The appeal shall be heard on the record and confined to actions taken by the institution and the Commission up to and through the date of the Commission decision which is being appealed. Only information and material before the Commission up to and through the date of the Commission's decision that is being appealed may be introduced, including that which was reviewed as part of the Commission's internal appeal process.
- h. The Hearing Board shall make its decision by a vote of the majority on the basis of the admissible evidence and arguments presented to it at the hearing.
 - (1) If the Board finds for the institution on one or more of grounds (1) through (3) of Section 2f above, the Board shall remand the case to the appropriate Commission for reconsideration.
 - (2) If the Board finds for an institution on ground (4) of Section 2f above, it shall either remand the case to the appropriate Commission for

reconsideration or, in the appropriate instance, grant the appeal and direct the Commission to take action which will effectuate the decision at its next meeting.

- (3) If it finds against the institution on any of the four grounds in Section 2f above, it shall deny that portion of the appeal which is based on that ground.
 - (4) If the Board orders reconsideration, the appropriate Commission shall reconsider the matter according to procedures it may adopt for this purpose. The Commission's decision following such reconsideration shall be final.
- i. At the conclusion of its deliberations, the Hearing Board shall issue its decision and the reasons therefor within forty-five (45) calendar days and inform, by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, the President of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the chairman of the governing board of the institution, and the Executive Director of the Commission concerned. Such decision shall be final.

ARTICLE VII. Financing

Financial support for the work of the Board of Directors of the Association shall be obtained by equal assessment on each of the three Accrediting Commissions.

ARTICLE VIII. Amendments

Proposed amendments to this Constitution may originate with any of the Commissions or with the Board of Directors. Such proposed amendments, except those relating to the size and composition of a Commission (See ARTICLE III, section 4), shall become effective upon approval by a two-thirds vote of each of the three commissions and of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IX. Indemnification

The Association does hereby grant indemnification to any officer, director, commissioner, or other agent, or former officer, director, commissioner, or other agent, including but not limited to WASC employees and team members, for claims or actions asserted against said person arising out of acts or omissions alleged to have occurred in connection with, or as a result of his or her activities as an officer, director, commissioner, or agent, of this Association, to the fullest extent permitted by law; provided, however, as follows:

- a. If any claim or action is asserted or threatened to be asserted, as described in such statutes, the person requesting indemnification must give timely notice thereof to the President of the Association or the Chairperson of the Board of Directors;

- b. If the person requesting indemnification is not successful on the merits of the action, the Board of Directors, the members, or the court must determine that the person acted in good faith, in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in the best interests of the corporation, and without reason to believe his or her conduct was unlawful; and
- c. Indemnification shall be provided herein only to the extent that valid and collectible insurance coverage under all existing policies of insurance held by the Association has been exhausted.

GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Academic Credit: Credit applicable toward a degree or certificate at the institution awarding it, accepting it on transfer, or acknowledging equivalency from learning experience adequately substantiated.

Academic Freedom: Basic principle of academic life which protects the rights of faculty to teach and students to learn, conduct research, and participate as citizens without external or institutional interference; subject to limitations of subject matter competence, full disclosure of financial gain from research, and separation of citizen activities from institutional representation (AAUP, 1940).

Accreditation: A voluntary process involving an association of schools and colleges to encourage high standards of education. Accreditation indicates that the Accrediting Commission judges that an institution is guided by well-defined and appropriate goals, that it has established conditions and procedures under which its goals can be realized, that it is accomplishing them substantially, that it is so organized, staffed and supported that it can be expected to continue to do so, and that it meets the standards of the Commission.

ACCJC: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

ACSCU: Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities.

Administration: Those personnel identified by title who have defined responsibilities for direction and supervising institutional functions.

Admissions Policy: The rationale which determines the applicants who shall be admitted to an institution. Consideration is given to the role assigned to the institution by its governing body; the programs, resources, and facilities of the institution; and the qualifications and goals of the applicant.

AICPA: American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Publishes the guide, "Audits of Colleges and Universities."

ALO: Accreditation Liaison Officer. The individual in an institution assigned to carry on most continuing relations with the Commission. See policy on "Institutional Accreditation Liaison Officer," page 102.

Annual Report: Report filed with the Commission which provides WASC and ACE directory information; includes brief statement of key institutional activities.

Appeal: An appeal from Commission decision to a panel in accordance with due process described in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association (see WASC Appeals Procedures, pages 122-129).

Appropriate: Term used to indicate a judgmental matter, possibly debatable or subject to differences of educated opinion, *i.e.*, student services appropriate to a particular clientele; depth of content appropriate to a particular level.

Articulation: The process of reaching agreement between institutions or units of institutions so that individual students may pursue a course of study without duplication of courses or levels of competency.

Calendar: The institution's scheduling arrangement for classes, *i.e.*, quarter, semester, summer, intersession, etc.

Candidate: Candidate for Accreditation is a status of preliminary affiliation with the Commission, initially awarded for two years, following a specified procedure for institutional self study and on-site visitation. Candidacy is subject to renewal. Candidacy is not accreditation and does not assure eventual accreditation. It is an indication that the institution is progressing toward accreditation.

Catalog: The official bulletin or college publication stating admission and graduation requirements, majors, minors, current course offering, costs, faculty, and all other significant information necessary for an accurate understanding of the institution.

CCLC: Community College League of California (formerly CACC, California Association of Community Colleges).

CEO: Chief executive officer of a district or system.

College: Generic term to denote any of the postsecondary educational institutions; in this Handbook it is used as a synonym for "institution."

Commission: The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

Complaint: In WASC terms, a written complaint to the Commission against an institution. See policy on "Special Institutional Reviews and Consideration of Complaints," page 103.

Comprehensive Self study Report: Basic self study document prepared by the institution every six years in preparation for the evaluation site visit.

Comprehensive Review: A comprehensive self study and team visit which occurs every six years.

Contract Education: Classes or services offered by a college in fulfillment of a contract with a public or private agency, a corporation, an association, or other body or person.

COPA: The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. A national organization representing institutional and specialized accrediting agencies and the general public.

Course: A single subject described in college catalog or bulletin.

Credit, Unit of: A quantification of student learning. One semester unit represents the time a typical student is expected to devote to learning in one week of full-time study (40-45 hours per week including class time and preparation). An alternative norm is one unit for three hours of student work per week (e.g., one hour of lecture and two of study, or three of laboratory) for a full quarter or semester.

District Office: A central administrative and coordinating agency, responsible for the activities of two or more community colleges. (See also "System.")

Executive Director: The chief full-time officer of the Commission.

Faculty: Teaching and other professional personnel including librarians, counselors, and similar professional specialists in non-administrative positions.

FRACHE: Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education. An organization of regional commissions, replaced in 1975 by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

Governing Board: ("Board of Regents," "Board of Trustees"): Elected or appointed body responsible for the basic policies which govern the institution.

Level: Refers to placement of students at a certain level of college work, i.e., first two years or Associate Degree.

Midterm Report: Report addressing the responses to the evaluation team recommendations filed with the Commission in the third year following a comprehensive review and evaluation visit.

Non-credit: Courses and programs for which no academic credits are awarded.

Outcomes: See student outcomes.

Policy: A written statement approved by the Commission.

President: A generic term signifying the chief executive of an institution. Provost, director, etc., may be substituted.

Probation: A negative status assigned to an institution because of failure to comply with Commission standards or requirements. See policy on "Negative Actions of the Commission," page 107.

Program: A systematic, usually sequential, grouping of courses, forming a considerable part, or all, of the requirements for a degree or credential. May refer to the total educational offering of an institution.

Review: Upon request by an institution, reexamination by the Commission of a negative action taken by it.

Show Cause: A negative status including a specific date when candidacy or accreditation will be withdrawn if certain conditions are not met. See policy on "Negative Actions of the Commission" pages 107-108.

Staff: All employed personnel (the inclusive term).

Student Outcomes: The effects that an institution has upon students.

Substantive Change: See policy, page 105.

Support Staff: Personnel in positions that do not require certification (in those states with certification laws). Usually includes office workers, fiscal specialists, maintenance personnel, technicians, and aides.

System: A central administrative and coordinating agency, responsible for the activities of a number of colleges, sometimes both senior colleges and community colleges.

Team (also "Visiting Team" or "Evaluation Team") A group assigned to review an institution's self study, to visit the institution for on-site validation of the self study, and to report to the Commission its findings and recommendations in a written evaluation report.

WASC: Western Association of Schools and Colleges.